

Evaluation of the COASTAL Project Final Report

A report for the COASTAL Project Board
January 2015



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List of abbreviations

AHC	After Housing Costs
BME group	Black and Minority Ethnic group
CAP	Capability Assessment Process
CBA	Cost Benefit Analysis
CBC	County Borough Council
CC	County Council
CCT	Cross-cutting Themes
COAST	Creating Opportunities And Skills Teams
COASTAL	Creating Opportunities And Skills Teams Alliance
CV	Curriculum Vitae
DLA	Disability Living Allowance
DWP	Department for Work and Pensions
ESA	Employment and Support Allowance
ESF	European Social Fund
IB	Incapacity Benefit
ILM	Intermediary Labour Market
ILO	International Labour Organisation
IS	Income Support
JADD	Joint Assessment Family Framework
JAFF	Joint Assessment Family Framework
JCP	Job Centre Plus
JSA	Jobseeker's Allowance
LA	Local Authority
LD	Learning disability
N	Number of responses
nb	Please note (derived from the Latin 'nota bene')
NDDP	New Deal for Disabled People
NEET	Not in education, employment or training
NOMIS	Office for National Statistics data service
ONS	Office for National Statistics
OR	Odds Ratio
PIP	Personal Independence Payment
SDA	Severe Disablement Allowance
SDP	Swansea Drugs Project
SET	Specialist European Team
TAF	Team Around the Family
UC	Universal Credit
WCADA	Wales Council on Alcohol and Drug Abuse
WCVA	Wales Council for Voluntary Action
WEFO	Welsh European Funding Office
WRAG	Work Related Activity Group

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Executive summary

Introduction

COASTAL was a ~£40million part European funded project covering the six local authority areas of Bridgend, Neath Port Talbot, Swansea, Carmarthenshire, Pembrokeshire and Ceredigion, implemented over a six year period between January 2009 and December 2014.

Its purpose was the promotion of vocational guidance, employment, skills training and lifelong learning opportunities for individuals who are currently economically inactive or unemployed as a result of illness, disability, (mental illness, learning disability, physical disability, sensory impairment) substance misuse problems and/or the serious social disadvantage associated with the transition from long-term care into adulthood. The project was part funded by the European Social Fund (ESF) via the Welsh European Funding Office (WEFO).

This report sets out the findings of an independent evaluation of the project undertaken by Wavehill Ltd. and commissioned by the COASTAL Project Board. The research and analysis for the evaluation was undertaken alongside the implementation of the project so that the findings could be reported to the Project Board during the delivery period, thereby giving an opportunity to react to emerging findings.

Headline performance indicators*

- COASTAL supported 8,223 participants.
- Of those, 3,549 (43%) gained a qualification and 4,624 (56%) achieved 'other positive outcomes'.
- 1,070 (13%) participants entered further learning and 832 (10%) entered employment meaning that 23% achieved an 'exit outcome' as a result of the support provided.

*As of August 2014

The benefit to participants

The primary benefit of COASTAL apparent to the participants interviewed for this evaluation was the 'stability' and 'social skills' it brings to their lives (Chapter 6). The confidence that participants develop as a result of their participation in the project was also a common theme within interviews.



The themes that emerge can in fact be considered as having two separate yet overlapping dimensions; a primary dimension of social development and a secondary dimension of increasing employability as illustrated by the graphic above.

From the participants perspective, it is clear that both social and employment dimensions (or cogs as illustrated) are important in terms of their 'progress' and there is evidence of COASTAL participation leading to both those outcomes. The strong suggestion from the data is that employment related outcomes cannot exist without the necessary personal & social skills and abilities together with sufficient confidence in ones self. In other words, it would not be possible to achieve employment outcomes without also (and first) achieving social and personal development outcomes.

The importance of self-efficacy highlighted within responses to our survey of participants (Chapter 6) and within the literature review (Chapter 10) also suggests that future service development should seek to build on good practice across COASTAL provision in supporting and building participant's confidence in their own abilities alongside actions to develop and enhance their skills and abilities.

Recommendation 1:

The emphasis in COASTAL on providing a mix of support *based on the needs of the individual* and on overcoming their barriers to employment has been correct with the range and mix of support available being critical to its success. This approach should be maintained in the future as part of any future incarnation of the COASTAL project.

The type of participants engaged and the type of support provided

Broadly, the evaluation has concluded that the COASTAL model reflects and incorporates the latest thinking and research on supporting people into employment as discussed in Chapter 10. Either explicitly or implicitly, the project seeks to promote and develop protective factors that have been identified by research as important pre-requisites for successful transitions into employment.

With such a diverse client base, the challenge is ensuring that all clients receive systematic and coherent support that simultaneously builds the combination of factors, including self-efficacy and addressing health related barriers to employment. COASTAL allows for this by developing a plan for each individual participant which seeks to address the range of barriers and challenges that they face and then reviewing and updating that plan as the individual progresses.

The broad range of participants being supported has however been a challenge for the project. The emphasis was always on working with participants who were the furthest away from the labour market and on helping those participants to progress *towards* a situation where they are able to gain and hold employment. However, the changes to the target for moving participants *into* employment during the lifetime of the project (down from 32% of participants engaged to 10%) is an indication that the project's potential to achieve actual employment outcomes was accepted as being less than originally anticipated.

A number of factors have led to this change including the economic recession and the introduction of new support structures such as the DWP Work Programme (as discussed in Chapters 11 and 12). However, it would seem clear that COASTAL has been even more about moving participants *towards* employment rather than *into* employment than originally conceived.

The research with participants undertaken for this evaluation suggest that:

- Participants who reported no significant barrier to employment were the most likely to secure employment and those who reported drugs and alcohol dependency were the least; and
- There was a strong and significant relationship between participant's perceived distance from the labour market and employment outcomes - how participants perceive themselves (i.e. their self-confidence) can have a big bearing on outcomes.

In light of the above, there is a clear argument that, *if* the primary purpose of the project is to achieve employment outcomes, it should be focused on engaging with participants who do not have significant barriers to employment and do not perceive themselves not to be employable. This has not always been the case for COASTAL which, it could be argued has actually taken the opposite approach in respects of much of its activity. This should not however necessarily be interpreted as a criticism of the project because that is what it was designed to do.

Analysis of the interviews with participants underlines the wide range of participants that COASTAL supported, ranging from those who are relatively close to the labour market to those who need a considerable amount of support before they could be considered to be ready to enter employment or further learning. This was also reflected in the interviews with project managers, project staff and when analysing the performance of different elements of the project against the performance indicators.

There is a clear rationale for working with those furthest away from the labour market and supporting their progression towards a situation where they can enter the labour market in terms of reducing economic inactivity but also to reduce pressure on social services. We are therefore not arguing that those activities should be withdrawn. If the COASTAL project is replicated, the nature of the participants being supported should however be reflected in how the project is monitored and the performance indicators that are used.

Recommendation 2:

The potential for a monitoring process (including performance indicators) which splits the 'journey towards employment' into a number of stages should be considered as part of any future COASTAL type project. This could include performance indicators (output and results targets) associated with (a) participant *engagement*, (b) participants becoming *work ready*, and (c) participants moving *into employment*.

Recommendation 3:

If the focus of a future project is on achieving employment related outcomes (including further learning), consideration should be given to a more focused / targeted approach in terms of the type of participants that are engaged and service provided - i.e. a focus on participants with clear potential to achieve the desired outcomes within the lifetime of the project and on the right type of support (see below).

The flexibility within the project which allowed local authorities and other providers to deliver support in a way which best fits with the structures they had in place already was clearly critical in terms of creating a regional project; the local authorities would not have been able to join the project without that flexibility. However, it did lead to inconsistency in terms of how the project is delivered across the region as is apparent from the analysis of the project monitoring data (Chapter 4), cost benefit analysis (Chapter 5) and interviews with project managers (Chapter 6).

The obvious question is - does that matter? Most stakeholders argued that it should not, as long as the outcomes of the project are being achieved. We would generally support that view and favour an outcome driven approach. However, the inconsistencies in terms of delivery that such an approach generates need to be taken into account. In particular, there is a risk that such flexibility will allow the focus of the project to 'drift' in some areas (e.g. the focus on achieving employment outcomes becomes diluted) and it could be argued that the varying performance of different elements of the COASTAL project is evidence that this has occurred.

Recommendation 4:

Future regional projects should maintain the flexibility (outcome focus) that allows local authorities and other partners to deliver a service in a way which builds upon and adds value to existing services in their area. *However*, there must be a clear and consistent focus on achieving a common outcome (e.g. employment outcomes). Key elements of a project which are considered to be critical to its success (e.g. a central referral process / team) should also be consistent across a regional project. In other words, the flexibility should not be to the extent that there is no clear and consistent outcome or no consistency in terms of how a project is delivered across a region (see below).

In terms of specific activities, three strands of the COASTAL project stood out when stakeholders were asked to identify what they considered to be the 'core' elements of the project which should be maintained moving forward. They were:

- The individual led approach (rather than service led);
- Centralised referral process / teams;
- 'Work projects' that provide a bridge between social services and employment.

The final point is of particular interest. These projects were frequently referred to as examples of where COASTAL has been successful both in terms of the benefit to the participant but also in terms of changing the emphasis of support and a greater focus on employment outcomes. A number of stakeholders described the ‘massive leap’ that participants needed to make to achieve the transition from ‘supported’ to employed and that this was a substantial barrier to achieving employment outcomes. The solution to this has been in a number of instances to set-up projects that fill that gap by setting up ‘work projects’.

Because they were being set-up as commercial (income generating) social enterprises they were also key parts of the exit strategy for COASTAL in a number of areas. Further, they offered the opportunity to create actual employment opportunities for participants who progress to becoming paid employees of the projects being set up (usually employed at the current time by the local authority but ultimately possibly employed by the social enterprise if and when it becomes self-sustaining). This is a key element of COASTAL which needs to be further developed.

Recommendation 5:

The ‘work project’ / ‘social enterprise’ model developed by COASTAL should be further explored and developed as part of any future programmes or projects. The potential to integrate creating and/or offering intermediary labour market opportunities alongside sheltered employment within any future incarnation of the COASTAL project should also be explored.

COASTAL was clearly an ambitious project in terms of the change in way support is provided to the target group that it was seeking to promote and introduce. The ‘lesson learnt’ is that such a change can be a challenging and long-term process to introduce.

One of the challenges for COASTAL from the onset has been the need to change the emphasis within ‘social services’ towards moving participants towards an exit outcome and specifically towards and into employment. The findings of the evaluation are that substantial progress has been made in this respect although the process has been slow. In particular, it is clear that the rationale for the focus on employment related outcomes within COASTAL has not been well understood (or, if it has been understood, it has not been accepted) amongst some of those charged with delivering the project, especially those from a social service background and a history of working with those with significant issues to overcome.

There are two ways in which this could be addressed. Firstly, steps could be taken to communicate (on an ongoing basis) with the staff in question in order to explain the rationale for the changes being introduced. Secondly, the experience of COASTAL suggests that it can be necessary to ‘push through’ the changes being introduced. In other words, both the carrot and the stick are likely to be needed.

Recommendation 6:

Future projects of a similar nature to COASTAL should ensure that local authority level managers are senior enough (or have adequate support from more senior staff) to ensure that the services being introduced are fully integrated with existing support structures within the authority.

Recommendation 7:

Future projects should include ongoing provision, communication and consultation with staff about the changes being introduced to the service being provided and why they are considered appropriate / what the changes are designed to achieve.

The regional approach

The regional approach used for COASTAL has both advantages and disadvantages, both of which need to be acknowledged and taken into account when considering utilising such an approach in the future.

The single / central 'management' structure in a regional model is perhaps the most obvious potential advantage. Key administrative functions are shared in a regional model, being undertaken by the regional team. Most notably, the audit process (and team) is centralised which should reduce costs and improve consistency of approach. The sheer scale and financial value (and therefore risk) of COASTAL has however led to a focus in the work of the regional team on ensuring the administrative process is robust, which it has been found to be as demonstrated by the clean bill of health given to the project by an audit in mid-2014. Inevitably however, this focus on audit and administration has an impact on delivery and the administrative burden was a constant criticism in the discussions with staff. It has also meant that the regional team has been able to commit limited resource to activities such as sharing of good practice, facilitating networking and providing what some described as an 'operational lead' that would have addressed some concerns about the different ways in which support was provided and performance against targets (as discussed further below)

Recommendation 8:

- (a) Future projects should have a clear focus (balance) on providing operational leadership across the region alongside delivery of administrative and audit responsibilities.
- (b) The potential to create two regional teams (or regional roles which one partner leads on) as part of future regional projects should be considered; (i) administration & audit, and (ii) operational leadership and networking.

Recommendation 9:

It is recommended that consideration be given to limiting future 'regional' projects in SW Wales (or sub-dividing the project) to three local authority area groups – Ceredigion, Carmarthenshire and Pembrokeshire (West) and Bridgend, Neath Port Talbot and Swansea (East).

There has been substantial cooperation and sharing of knowledge and expertise at a senior management level. This has been especially beneficial in terms of developing and implementing a regional response to issues such as the introduction of the DWP Work Programme and the need to develop the action plan in response to WEFO concerns about the performance of the project in relation to the employment results. Stakeholders also highlighted being able to share risk amongst the partners, specifically in terms of achieving project outputs and expenditure targets as an advantage of the regional approach; any under-performance in one part of the project could be mitigated by another. This risk is however still, to a large extent with the lead sponsor - in this case, the City and County of Swansea – who have the contract with WEFO to deliver the project and would be subject to any claw-back of funding. Whilst service level agreements will address this, it is still perceived as a substantial risk for any local authority taking on that role. This needs to be acknowledged as it could be a serious block on any future regional projects.

Recommendation 10:

The potential to allow groups of local authorities to share the role of ‘lead sponsor’ for high value regional projects in the future should be considered with a view to minimising the financial risk that is associated with the role.

It is clear that a wide range of knowledge, skills and experience have developed within the various teams delivering COASTAL over the project’s lifetime. It is questionable however whether the best possible use has been made of that knowledge, skills and experience *at a regional level*. Interviews with project managers identified a potential model in which members of staff (in particular project managers) from within a local authority could ‘take the lead’ for a particular element of the project or activity on a region wide basis based on the fact that they had particular expertise, knowledge and experience in relation to that matter. For example, a project manager from one local authority could be asked to take the lead on the development of ‘work projects’ across the region. This would allow a regional project to utilise the knowledge and skills that exist in one or a few local authority areas across the region without necessarily having to recruit that individual into a regional team on a full-time basis. It may also reduce the pressure on the regional team to lead on those aspects of the project.

Recommendation 11:

The potential to give project managers from local authorities or other delivery partners within a regional project ‘region wide’ responsibility for certain aspects of the project should be considered as part of any future incarnation of the COASTAL project.

Performance against key performance indicators

For a substantial proportion of its lifetime, the COASTAL project trailed behind the forecasts for its key performance indicators in terms of expenditure, outputs and results. The project did however latterly increase the rate at which results were being achieved to such an extent that it overachieved against both the number of participants engaged and the number of participants entering employment, albeit against the substantially revised targets for those indicators.

A number of factors need to be taken into account when considering the project's performance in this respect, including:

- COASTAL was working with participants who need a significant amount of support over a significant period of time before achieving a positive result; and
- The context within which COASTAL has been delivered has been challenging due to the prevailing economic conditions and the complications created by the introduction of the DWP Work Programme and ongoing reforms to the Welfare System.

An increase in the rate at which results were being achieved was always forecast in light of the fact that the participants COASTAL was working with required a substantial amount of support before the desired results could be achieved. However, the plan introduced in 2013 as a result of concerns on the part of WEFO that the project was underperforming has almost certainly contributed to an increase in the rate at which results were being achieved. The introduction of the plan can therefore be considered a success. We would however argue that it was apparent for some time previously that there was a very strong possibility that the project would not achieve its targets. The plan to improve performance should, therefore, have been developed and put in place sooner than it was.

Recommendation 12:

There should be a clear emphasis on performance management / monitoring progress against the performance indicators (i.e. targets) as part of any management and administration of any future version of the COASTAL project with a view to introducing actions to improve performance against those targets as soon as it becomes apparent that there is a risk that they may not be achieved.

It is apparent that the method used to set the targets for the project, which was largely based on extrapolating the achievements of a similar project in one local authority area across the region, was not robust enough. It is however important to acknowledge that setting targets during an application process can be challenging, due to the fact that a number of issues may only become apparent during the detailed planning stage. Some flexibility during that phase is therefore important.

Recommendation 13:

A more robust approach should be used to set performance indicators / targets for any COASTAL type project developed in the future to ensure that they take into account the specific characteristics and circumstances in different parts of the region. There should also be some flexibility in the detailed planning stages of a project to adjust those targets (up and down) to the prevailing circumstances at that time.

Cost benefit analysis (CBA)

The CBA undertaken for this report (Chapter 5) found that, for every pound invested, the COASTAL project gave a positive return of £1.09. As discussed in the report, this analysis needs to be treated with some caution due to the limitations, including a narrow and specific definition of what constitutes an outcome. However the analysis is still instructive and valuable

On face value, at £1.09 overall, COASTAL slightly underperformed when compared to initiatives which have been subject to a CBA using a similar framework. These programmes however appear to have a significant focus on employment outcomes, even though they worked with a diverse range of populations. We should be wary, however, of drawing too much from this comparison. Although the models underpinning each CBA included a range of similar variables, including savings to the Exchequer, each analysis contains a unique set of limitations and biases that are impossible to determine without revisiting and reanalysing the original data.

COASTAL Regional Project Board response

Once again, the members of the COASTAL Project Regional Project Board would like to thank the team at Wavehill for this very comprehensive final evaluation of the Project. Over the course of the past five years, the Wavehill team have been an invaluable help to the Project in acting in the role of '*critical friend*'. Despite the criticisms occasionally causing angst and consternation amongst the Project team, their objective and independent nature have nevertheless been of immense help in ensuring that the Project has been steered in the right direction.

Whilst this report is the final in a series, it cannot fully represent the final position of the Project. As with the four previous Evaluation Reports, it must be recognised that the statistical content of the report has been based upon the achievements evidenced and claimed up to a particular point in time. In this case, August 2014, which was the latest point at which full claim data could be provided. Since August, the Project teams across the region have been working tirelessly to garner the evidence required in order to register the final claim figures. Coupled with this, many areas of the Project have continued to deliver a range of services right up to 31st December, with those services now having been sustained by the respective Authorities as part of their mainstream programmes. Each of these services have continued to achieve additional outcomes which had yet to be claimed at the time that the report was being compiled.

As clearly depicted in Figures 4.3 (p18), 4.6 (p22) & 4.8 (p24) the Project performance has dramatically escalated over the past 18 months. The reasons for this are manifold. Firstly, the participant group has always been recognised as one that would require much more intensive and longer term support in order to achieve the desired outcomes. This is particularly true in relation to qualifications gained, where it must be recognised that the majority of our participants enter the Project with little or no educational qualification. As a result, the depth of intervention required is considerable, resulting in many participants 'starting from scratch' and working up through Entry Level courses up to, in some cases, Level Three qualification. Unfortunately, as only one qualification per participant may be claimed, i.e. the highest achieved, this '*journey*' through multiple qualifications is not formally recognised.

Similarly, in relation to entering employment, the need to gradually build confidence, alongside skills, has meant that the time required to reach a level at which the participant, most of whom have never previously worked, feels confident to enter employment has been considerably longer than that which may be expected in the general population. A further relevant factor is that of capacity to work, often as a result of the illness/disability, which in many cases limits the amount of time an individual can work. A significant number of participants have entered employment, either on 'zero hours' contracts, or at a level of less than 16 hours per week. This group, even though they have now moved out of the economically inactive category, are not formally recognised as having achieved an employment exit outcome.

As shown in the table below, the final claim figures as submitted in January 2015, have continued this escalation and show that all targets have either been exceeded, or are well within an acceptable variance level. Also included in the table are the 'supplementary' achievements, giving an indication of the level of total qualifications gained and the numbers who have entered employment at less than 16 hours.

There are references within the report to this dramatic improvement in performance, reportedly as a result of the action plan implemented following the special conditions imposed by WEFO in August 2013. Whilst it is true to say that the outcomes claimed showed a major rise from that period on, that improvement had already begun months previously, following the revised Project plan agreed with WEFO in December 2012, with the results only becoming apparent in August. If, for example one considers the graph depicting cumulative employment achieved, (p24), the increase in outcomes commences well before August and continues to rise thereafter.

With regard to Section '**13.4 – Performance against key performance indicators**' we believe that it is crucial to point out that, throughout the life of the Project, there has been a consistent emphasis placed on the need to monitor targets, coupled with a regular review of performance in conjunction with WEFO. This on-going review is demonstrated by the number of discussions with WEFO which have resulted in the adjusting of targets over the life of the Project. In addition to the overriding difficulties caused by the national economic downturn, the major issue for the Project in the area of performance has been one of challenging a culture within the social care services which have, traditionally, never been subject to any type of formal outcome measurement. As a result, the concept of delivering a service in line with a set target has required a radical alteration in mind set for many staff.

Whilst we would all wish to have seen even greater outcomes achieved, the performance of the COASTAL Project can, nevertheless, be compared very favourably with other employment programmes, as shown in Section 5.3 of this report. In a similar vein, recent reports by the Parliamentary Select Committee and the National Council for Voluntary Organisations, on the performance of the Department of Work & Pensions 'Work Programme', showed that in respect of the Work Programme, whilst 1 in 10 ESA claimants, with a 3 or 6 month prognosis, (*Work Related Group*), achieved a job outcome within a year of referral, only 2.9% of other ESA Support Group claimants and former Incapacity Benefit claimants are achieving job outcomes within 12 months. Given that these two latter groups make up the majority of COASTAL participants, it is clear that the 10.42% of participants into employment achieved by COASTAL compares extremely favourably. The comparison is even more marked when one considers that, overall, since the launch of the Work Programme, to March 2014, an average of just 6.5% of all ESA claimants have achieved a job outcome. This figure goes down to just 4% if you take out those claimants who are expected to be fit for work within a year, i.e. The Work Related Group.

The Cost Benefit Analysis contained within the report is of particular interest, in that, despite the obvious high cost of the intensive support provided, it still shows the Project to be effectively cost neutral, with a very slight benefit to the Public Purse. However, it should be recognised that this is only the position at the point in time that the report was compiled. The on-going services maintained from July to December 2014 will have already added to that cost benefit. The work that the Project has undertaken has laid the foundations for a legacy which will see wide ranging changes in the way in which local authority services and support are provided to individuals experiencing barriers as a result of their illness or disability. We have already mentioned the fact that a range of COASTAL activities are being adopted and sustained by Local Authorities as part of their mainstream provision. This legacy will, we are sure, continue to deliver on-going cost benefits to the Authorities concerned and to the wider exchequer for many years to come.

The content of this final report has, we believe, proven that the Project, despite the inevitable hitches along the way, has performed extremely well. Whilst the quantitative results in terms of outcomes achieved may not be the highest which might have been expected, they have met or exceeded the majority of the projected targets. From another perspective, however, it can be seen from the comments from participants and the case studies, that the qualitative results of the Project in terms of the positive impact on the lives of its participants have been exceptional.

Finally, the members of the Project Board would like to thank all of the staff members, in the Regional Team, the local Project Management and Service Delivery Teams from the Local Authorities and the Third Sector organisations across the region, who have worked so hard to make the Project such a success. Perhaps more importantly, huge thanks must go to the participants, all of whom have contributed so much effort and commitment to the Project. We hope that the Project has helped to improve their lives and we wish them all the very best in their future endeavours.

Table of final outcome figures as at 31st Dec 2014:

<i>Final Claim Output & Results Report – As at 31/12/2014</i>	Profiled Target	Final Claim	% Variance
OUTPUTS			
No. of participants enrolled	7,500	8,273	+10.30%
Of which :-			
Participants – Economically inactive	-	5,248	N/A
Participants – Unemployed	-	1,373	N/A
Participants – Long-term unemployed	-	1,442	N/A
Participants – Employed (Less than 16hrs p.w.)	-	109	N/A
Participants – Self-employed (Less than 16hrs p.w.)	-	21	N/A
Participants – Full-time education	-	80	N/A
Female participants	2,790	3,107	+11.36%
Participants - NEET	593	583	-1.70%
Participants - BME	159	233	+46.54%
Participants – 50+	2,100	1,730	-17.62%
Participants – Lone parents	188	649	+245.21%
Projects using soft outcome measurement systems	1	1	0%
Projects integrating sustainable development into awareness raising, education and training programmes	1	1	0%
RESULTS			
No. of participants gaining a qualification	4,500	3,663	-18.60%
Total no. of qualifications gained	-	4,872	N/A
No. of participants entered employment 16hrs +	750	862	+14.93%
No. of participants entered employment below 16hrs	-	105	N/A
No. of participants entered further learning	1,875	1,632	-12.96%
No. of participants gaining a positive outcome	4,500	4,842	+7.60%
Total no. of positive outcomes gained	-	7,009	N/A
Employers adopting or improving equality and diversity strategies and monitoring systems	10	9	-10.00%

1 Introduction

COASTAL was a ~£40million part European funded project covering the six local authority areas of Bridgend, Neath Port Talbot, Swansea, Carmarthenshire, Pembrokeshire and Ceredigion, implemented over a six year period between January 2009 and December 2014.

Its purpose was the promotion of vocational guidance, employment, skills training and lifelong learning opportunities for individuals who are currently economically inactive or unemployed as a result of illness, disability, (mental illness, learning disability, physical disability, sensory impairment) substance misuse problems and/or the serious social disadvantage associated with the transition from long-term care into adulthood. The project was part funded by the European Social Fund (ESF) via the Welsh European Funding Office (WEFO).

This report sets out the findings of an independent evaluation of the project undertaken by Wavehill Ltd. and commissioned by the COASTAL Project Board. The research and analysis for the evaluation was undertaken alongside the implementation of the project so that the findings could be reported to the project board during the delivery period, thereby giving an opportunity to react to emerging findings. This is the fifth report produced over the course of the evaluation. This final report supersedes all previous reports and draws together those findings together with those of the research undertaken for this final report.

The remainder of this report is set out as follows:

- Chapter 2 provides an overview of the subject of the evaluation, the COASTAL project including the rationale for the project, the support that has been provided, its administration, key performance indicators and funding.
- Chapter 3 very briefly describes how the evaluation was undertaken including the evaluation questions that were set, the fieldwork undertaken and so on.
- Chapter 4 analyses the monitoring data for COASTAL, including outputs (activities) and results (that happen directly as a result of the outputs undertaken).
- Chapter 5 discusses the findings of a cost-benefit analysis of COASTAL including comparing the results with those for other similar programmes.
- Chapter 6 analyses the findings of interviews that were undertaken with 309 COASTAL participants over the course of the evaluation.
- Chapter 7 includes case studies of a number of participants supported by COASTAL. It is intended to provide 'real' examples of how participants have benefited from the support provided to them.
- Chapter 8 includes case studies that provide examples of how COASTAL support has been provided across the region. The case studies presented are not intended as examples of 'best practice' from within the project. Rather, they are included as an illustration of the activity and support provided.

- Chapter 9 discusses the management and delivery of the COASTAL project with an emphasis on identifying the 'lessons learnt' which can be applied in the future.
- The brief literature review in Chapter 10 explores research that helps us understand the challenges in supporting people with significant health barriers into employment. It outlines the latest thinking on how to promote successful and sustainable transitions, and considers how these insights could be used in support of COASTAL.
- Chapter 11 considers the policy and strategy developments that have occurred over the lifetime of the COASTAL project and how they have affected the delivery of the project.
- Chapter 12 reviews the economic conditions prevalent during the delivery of the COASTAL project and considered how they may have impacted upon its delivery and what could be achieved.
- Finally, Chapter 13 draws together the conclusions of the evaluation and sets out a number of recommendations that should be considered if and when a project similar to COASTAL is developed in the future.

Additional information has also been included as appendices to this report, including the recommendations that have been made in reports over the course of the evaluation and the definitions for the indicators used to monitor the performance of the project.

2 An overview of the COASTAL project

This chapter provides an overview of the subject of the evaluation, the COASTAL project including the rationale for the project, the support that has been provided, its administration, key performance indicators and funding.

Key points

- COASTAL targeted individuals who were economically inactive and unemployed as a result of illness, disability, substance misuse problems and/or the serious social disadvantage associated with the transition from long-term care into adulthood.
- The rationale for the project was that long-term unemployment could be reduced and economic activity within the group increased with the provision of additional ‘individual specific’ support. This would also lead to a reduction in the need for, and cost of, social services in relation to this group.
- The COASTAL ‘process’ was essentially (a) the comprehensive assessment of the needs of an individual followed by, (b) the development and implementation of a bespoke programme of support to address those needs.
- The ‘lead sponsor’ for the project was the City and County of Swansea. The ‘joint sponsors’ for the project were the six local authorities that make up the South West Wales Region each of which had a COASTAL team. The project also included four ‘cross-regional’ elements.
- With a total cost in the region of £40m, COASTAL was funded by the European Social Fund (ESF) and administered by the Welsh European Funding Office (WEFO).
- Indicators used to monitor the performance of the project included the number of participants engaged and the number of participants achieving qualifications, further learning and employment.

2.1 Rationale

COASTAL was ‘targeted’ at a specific group of individuals: those who were economically inactive and unemployed as a result of illness, disability, substance misuse problems and/or the serious social disadvantage associated with the transition from long-term care into adulthood. The rationale for the COASTAL project was that those within that target group required additional and bespoke support (often described as “a focus on the individual”) in order to assist them to move towards and potentially into employment and, thereby, out of the social services support structure.

The impact of achieving this ‘change’ would be:

- Increased economic activity¹ from within the target group;
- Reduced (long-term) unemployment within the region; and
- A reduction in social services costs as individuals’ progress out of that support structure.

COASTAL was also seen as an opportunity to promote (or pilot) changes in the way in which social services were being provided to the target group with an emphasis on sharing good practice across the region.

2.2 Aims

The aims of the project were set out as follows in the Project Business Plan:

1. To develop a strategic direction for career pathways, employment routes and service delivery in the employment field.
2. To develop a strategic direction to offer opportunities for learning and work experience to move disadvantaged citizens from the target group from being economically inactive to active in the labour market.
3. To promote and develop regional working across counties and client groups to raise the status of the target participants and develop effective and efficient services.
4. To develop local, integrated services to enable the target participants to develop to their maximum potential.
5. To support and enable access to mainstream employment and learning opportunities with support where necessary.
6. To gain the support of employers to provide opportunities, by offering support, information and guidance in all aspects of engagement with participants.
7. To promote permanent employment, paid at the same rate of pay and same conditions as any other employee.
8. To promote the values of inclusion and independence into operational reality.
9. To assist the target participants to obtain and retain work by developing employment skills required by local employers.
10. To build better links between employment support services and organisations.

2.3 Delivery structure

COASTAL was a ‘regional project’ covering the six local authority areas of Bridgend, Neath Port Talbot, Swansea, Carmarthenshire, Pembrokeshire and Ceredigion as illustrated by the map to the right.



¹ It is important to note here that the definition of ‘economic activity’ is broader than being in employment; an individual is economically active if they are actively seeking employment.

The way in which the project was delivered did however vary between the different areas to reflect the fact that COASTAL was building upon and adding value to existing support structures in each area. This is a key feature of the project.

Six 'Creating Opportunities And Skills Teams' (COAST) - one in each local authority area – worked in collaboration with a range of internal and external service providers, as part of the 'Creating Opportunities And Skills Teams Alliance' (COASTAL). In addition to the local authority teams, there were four 'cross-regional' and specialist elements within COASTAL:

- The *Swansea Community Chaplaincy project* supported offenders at HMP Swansea during their bridging period of 'custody to community';
- *Prism* aimed to help those in the west part of the region with a drug and/or alcohol issue to overcome barriers to work and education;
- *Swansea Drugs Project (rebranded Sands Cymru from February 2013)* – providing support for those with drugs related issues in the east of the region;
- *Wales Council on Alcohol and Drug Abuse (WCADA)*² – providing support to those with alcohol and drug issues in the east of the region.

Each of the above organisations were contracted to deliver the service described following a competitive procurement process.

2.4 The support provided

Although the detail varied depending on the local authority area or cross-regional service in question, the basic COASTAL process was simple and consistent.

As illustrated by Figures 2.1 and 2.2³, the process began with a comprehensive assessment of the needs of each individual participant usually using a tool called 'Work Star' as a basis for that assessment⁴. This results in an 'individual programme' which details the support required in order to assist the participant to overcome the identified barriers to their engagement in learning, training and employment. The project then arranged the required support to meet the participants' needs, including access to appropriate education/skills training, supported employment or work experience, support with job applications, CV writing, interview skills and so on. The support continued for as long as the participant required it, up to a maximum of 12 months post-employment.

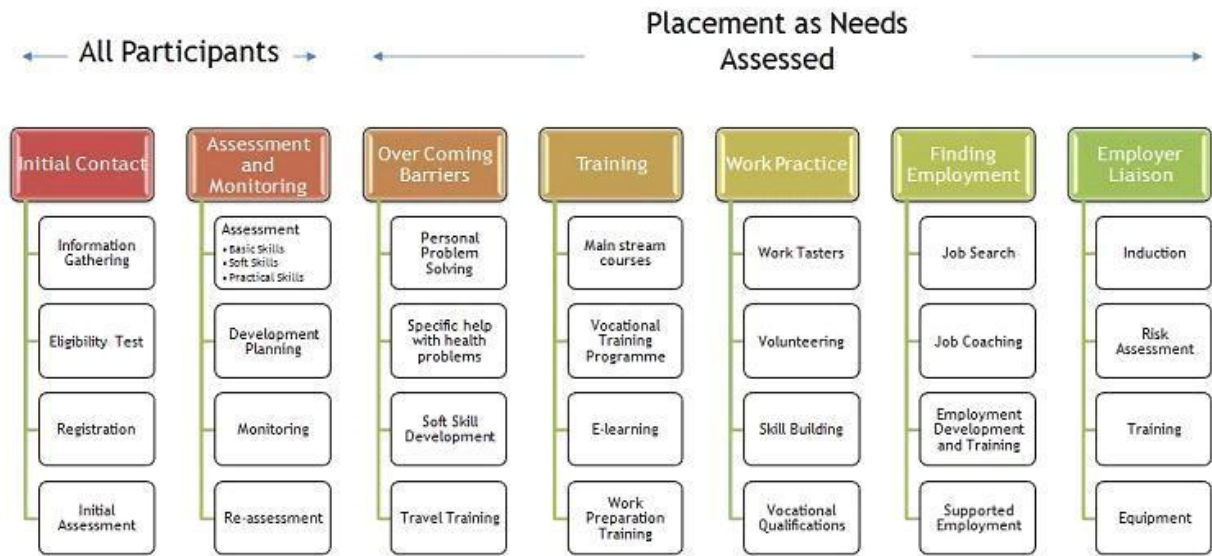
In addition to the work with individual participants, COASTAL also offered support, advice and guidance to a relatively small number of employers, in order to raise their awareness of illness and disability issues and to assist them in engaging with and, hopefully employing, project participants.

² Previously known as the West Glamorgan Council on Alcohol and Drug Abuse (WGCADA)

³ Both of these illustrations are taken from literature produced by the COASTAL project in Pembrokeshire but illustrate the approach in general.

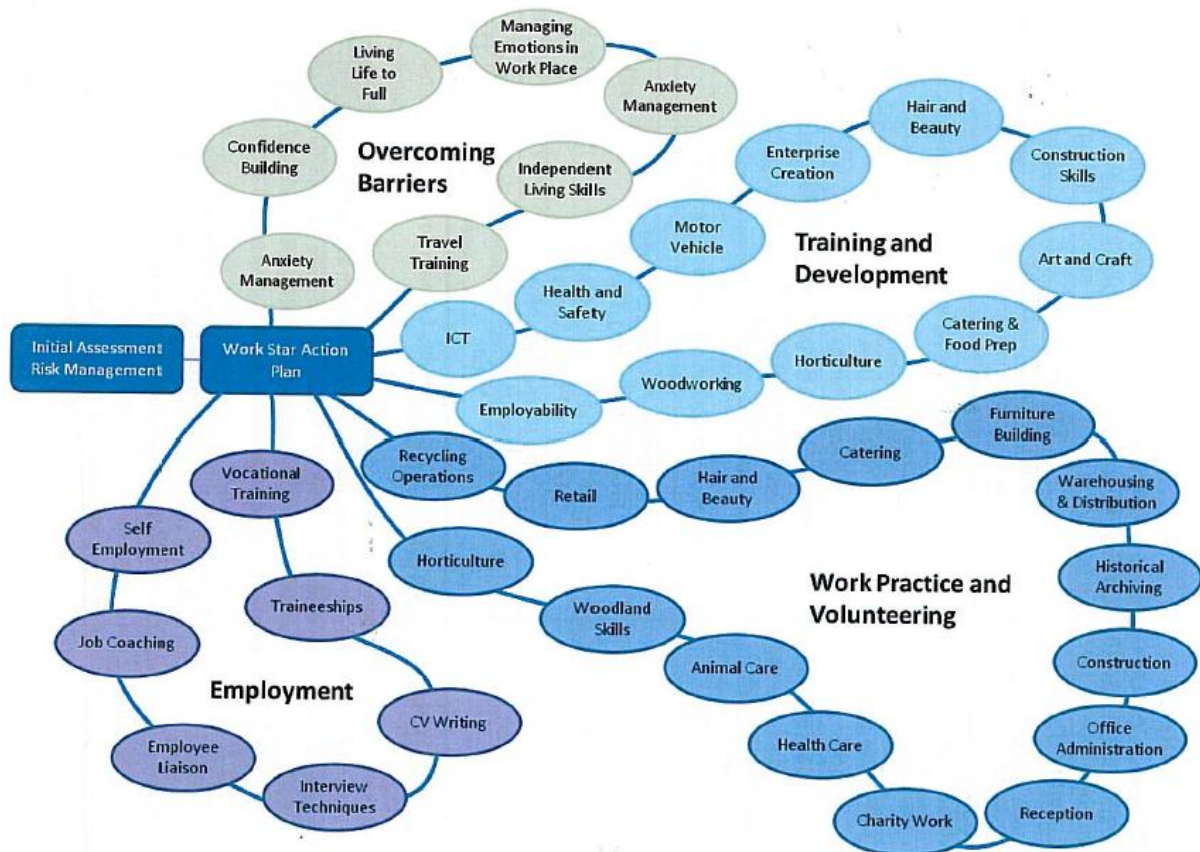
⁴ The Work Star Model is one of a series of 'Outcome Stars' developed by Triangle Consulting and designed to act as both a diagnostic tool and to capture data on what are often described as 'soft outcomes'. More information is available here: <http://www.outcomesstar.org.uk/work/>

Figure 2.1: The COASTAL process



Source: COAST project, Pembrokeshire

Figure 2.2: Illustration of the range of support provided by COASTAL

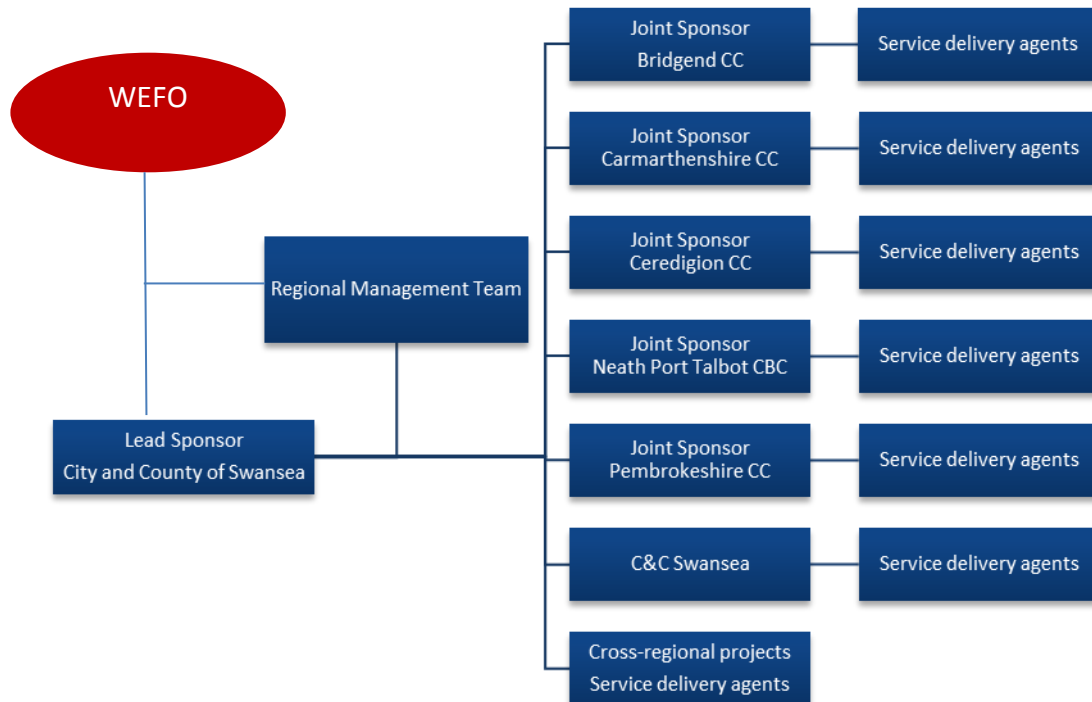


Source: COAST project, Pembrokeshire

2.5 Management structure

COASTAL includes a number of 'layers' within its management structure (Figure 2.3).

Figure 2.3: The management / delivery structure for the COASTAL project



The 'lead sponsor' for the project was the City and County of Swansea. This means that they applied for the funding, contract with WEFO and are ultimately responsible for the delivery of the project.

The *Regional Management Team* (based within the City and County of Swansea) includes the Regional Project Director, the Monitoring & Compliance Manager, the Regional Project Administrator, the Project Accountant, the Budget Officer and a Team Clerk. Essentially, that team had a dual role, to support the delivery of the project but also to monitor and audit its delivery providing all the necessary claims and reports to WEFO as well as the project board.

In addition to the City & County of Swansea, as lead sponsor, the 'joint sponsors' for the project were the remaining five local authorities that make up the south west Wales region. Service Level Agreements were established between the lead sponsor and the joint sponsors and local project managers appointed, in order to consolidate the project management arrangements and responsibilities across the region.

Once the project management arrangements were established, an open and competitive procurement process was undertaken to secure a range of service delivery agents who would be responsible for the direct delivery of the training and support to participants. As a result of this exercise, each of the six sponsoring authorities were separately contracted as delivery agents. This resulted in each of the authorities carrying responsibility for a dual role as project management and, with clear separation of duties, as service delivery agents.

All of the above procurement was managed by the Regional Management Team, on behalf of the lead sponsor. Further, the Regional Management Team procured the services of four specialist organisations to deliver the cross-regional elements of the project, as described above.

Some of the sponsoring authorities subsequently undertook further procurement exercises to secure services to deliver specific locally identified need. These services were primarily provided by sector specific third sector or independent (private sector) training organisations.

Having identified and established the sponsors and partners of the Project, the Regional Management Team put in place the following structure to manage the delivery of the project on a regional basis:

- *Area Project Management Groups* - provide an opportunity for the Project Director and Monitoring & Compliance Manager to meet with the local authority level teams.
- *Regional Lead Officer (operations) Group* - to provide an opportunity for the Project Director and Compliance Manager to meet with the team responsible for the operational management of the service delivery within each local authority area and the organisations delivering the cross-regional projects.
- *Regional Finance Group* - Quarterly meetings, during the initial Project years, to provide an opportunity for the Monitoring & Compliance Manager, Administrator, Accountant and Budget Officer to meet with the local authority teams.
- *Regional Project Board* – this group was ultimately responsible for the management of the strategic progress and development of the project. Its membership was made up of representatives at Senior Officer level (Director / Head of Service), from each of the Joint Sponsoring Authorities, the Regional Project Director, the Monitoring & Compliance Manager, the Project Managers from each of the local authorities and the Lead European Officer of the South West Wales Spatial European Team (SET).

2.6 Funding

COASTAL was part funded under Priority 2, Theme 1 of the ESF element of the Convergence Programme, which was active in the West Wales and the Valleys regions of Wales. The region was awarded the highest level of support (known as 'Convergence') from the European Union for the Structural Funds programming round 2007–2013. The ESF utilised around 40% of the resources from the total Convergence Programme. This meant a grant contribution of around £690 million and, coupled with match funding, a total investment of approximately £1.2 billion for the 2007-2013 funding period.⁵

The aim of Priority 2 (*Increasing employment and tackling economic inactivity*) was to raise levels of employment and economic activity, and secure higher participation in the labour market. It will do this through the delivery of two themes. The focus of Theme 2 was on helping people to remain in work. Theme 1 (under which COASTAL was funded) aimed to increase employment and tackle economic inactivity by bringing more people into employment through:

- Implementing active labour policies and supporting people to overcome a wide range of barriers to sustainable employment; and
- Helping to address specific barriers faced by disadvantaged groups.

The remainder of the funding for the project (known as 'match-funding') was provided by the delivery partners (mainly the local authorities).

The table below shows the total budget for the COASTAL project including how it has been reduced during the lifetime of the project. For reasons discussed later in this report, the budget has been reduced twice over the lifetime of the project representing, in total, an £8million or 16% reduction in the project budget.

Table 2.1: COASTAL project costs, ESF and match-funding

	Funds (original)	Funds (revised May 2012)	Funds (revised March 2013)	Variance from original	% Variance from original
Total project cost	£51,677,020	£48,806,206	£43,548,015	£5,258,191	16% decrease
ESF funding	£27,001,243	£25,501,243	£22,753,838	£2,747,405	16% decrease
Match funding	£24,675,777	£23,304,963	£20,794,177	£2,510,786	16% decrease

Source: April 2014 revised Business Plan

⁵ <http://wales.gov.uk/docs/wefo/publications/strategicframeworks/100202employmentinactivityframeworken.pdf>

2.7 Key performance indicators

A number of indicators were used to monitor the performance of the project, agreed with WEFO when the project was approved as noted in the table below. Definitions for these indicators can be found in Appendix 2. As above, the original targets have been included as well as those which applied at the end of the project. Again, the reasons for these reductions are discussed later in the report.

Table 2.2: COASTAL project outputs and results; including original and revised targets

Indicator		Target (original)	Target (revised May 2012)	Target (revised March 2013)	Variance from original
Outputs	Total participants	9,020	8,500	7,500	17% decrease
Results	Participants gaining qualifications	5,412	6,500	4,500	17% decrease
	Employers adopting or improving equality and diversity strategies and monitoring systems	20	10	10	50% decrease
	Participants entering employment	2,870	1,500	750	74% decrease
	Participants entering further learning	1,763	2,750	1,875	6% increase
	Participants gaining other positive outcomes	6,724	8,100	4,500	33% decrease

Source: April 2014 revised Business Plan

3 How the evaluation was undertaken

This chapter very briefly describes how the evaluation was undertaken including the evaluation questions that were set, the fieldwork undertaken and so on.

Key points

- A wide range of research fieldwork has been undertaken over the course of the evaluation including interviews and group discussions with the staff delivering COASTAL and a survey of over 250 participants.
- The methodology being used is based on the concept of viewing evaluation as a learning process and creating a strong link between the evaluation and ongoing activity

The evaluation was split into two separate yet overlapping parts:

- **Process:** How well is the project being managed and delivered? What, if anything, can be improved? What have been the main lessons learnt?
- **Outcomes:** What has the project achieved? What has been the impact of the project on the participants and employers engaged? Most importantly, has the project achieved its aims and objectives?

The methodology being used is based on the concept of viewing evaluation as a learning process and creating a strong link between the evaluation and ongoing activity – i.e. evaluation can have a direct and early effect on improving performance.

The graphic on the following page shows the research and fieldwork that has been undertaken during the course of the evaluation. A mixed method approach has been used whereby a mix of qualitative and quantitative data and evidence has been collected.

There has also been an emphasis on examining COASTAL from a number of different perspectives and using a range of different evidence as illustrated by the graphic to the right.

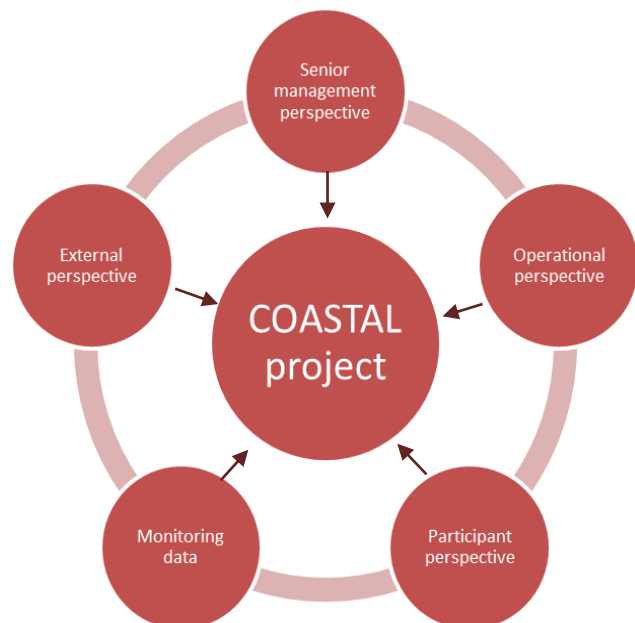


Figure 3.1: summary of the evaluation research and fieldwork



4 Analysis of project monitoring data

The monitoring of European funded projects in Wales is focused on a set of outputs (activities) and results (that happen directly as a result of the outputs undertaken) recorded and reported to WEFO on a quarterly basis.

It is important to note that this chapter analyses data for COASTAL up to the end of August 2014, four months prior to the end of the project, which was the most up to date data available at the time of this report.

Key points

- COASTAL supported 8,223 participants.
- Of those, at the time the analysis for this report was undertaken, 3,549 (43%) gained a qualification and 4,624 (56%) achieved 'other positive outcomes'.
- 1,070 (13%) participants entered further learning and 832 (10%) entered employment meaning that 23% achieved an 'exit outcome' as a result of the support provided.
- The project has achieved its targets in terms of the number of participants engaged, achieving 'other positive outcomes' and entering employment. At the time of the analysis, the targets for the number of participants gaining qualifications and entering further learning had not however been achieved.
- There is substantial variance in the performance of different areas and elements of the project, varied in terms of achieving the outputs and results anticipated (i.e. targets).
- The rate at which results were being achieved (especially qualifications gained and the number of participants gaining employment) increased substantially during the latter stages of the project.
- In terms of gender, COASTAL participants split into 63% male and 37% female with the proportion of males seemingly high when compared to 2011 census data.
- Analysis shows that a higher proportion of female participants have entered further learning (16% compared to 12%). The opposite is however true in terms of participants entering employment, where a higher proportion of male participants have achieved that result (11% compared to 8%) suggesting that the project has been more successful in terms of assisting male participants into employment.
- A higher proportion of participants in the older age group (55-64) have entered further learning than both the 25-54 and 15-24 groups (18% compared to 13% and 12% respectively).
- Conversely, when we look at the proportion of participants entering employment with those in the 15-24 age group more likely to achieve that result than their 55-64 group counterparts (12% compared to 7%). One possible explanation for this is that it has been more difficult to find employment opportunities for participants in the older age group.

4.1 The key performance indicators

To recap, the following key indicators have been used in order to monitor the performance of COASTAL:

Output:

- Number of participants in the project

Results:

- Participants gaining qualifications
- Participants gaining other positive outcomes
- Participants entering further learning
- Participants entering employment

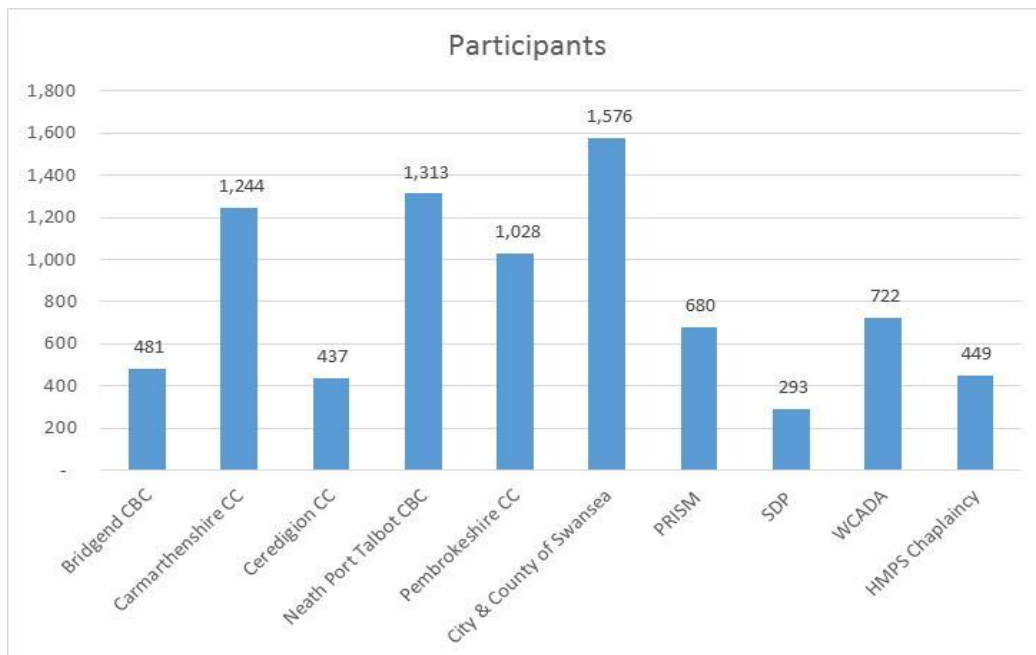
} Exit outcomes

The remainder of this chapter analyses the data that was gathered in respects of these indicators as well as some of the characteristics data such as the gender, age group and ethnicity of participants.

4.2 Participants

By the end of August 2014, **COASTAL had supported 8,223 participants**, an over-achievement of 723 (or 10 per cent) on the target (revised) of 7,500. The graph below shows how those participants were distributed amongst the various providers.

Figure 4.1: Distribution of COASTAL participants per provider*



Source: COASTAL Regional Team. *As of August 2014

The largest provider in terms of participant numbers is the City and County of Swansea which provided 19 per cent of participants. Together, Carmarthenshire CC, Neath Port Talbot CC and Swansea represent 50 per cent of the participants for the whole project.

The difference in participant numbers reflects the fact that COASTAL has been a very different project in terms of the scale of the intervention across the region.

4.3 Participants gaining qualifications

At the time of this analysis, **3,549 COASTAL participants had gained a qualification** as a result of the support provided. This represents 43 per cent of all participants in the project. The number is however lower than the target (revised) that had been set for the project which was 4,500 or 60 per cent of the total number of participants.

If we look at the distribution of participants gaining a qualification across the providers we see that achievement has varied substantially (table 4.1) with some overachieving their target – most notably Bridgend CBC - whilst others, as of August 2014, had not achieved their target by a considerable margin – most notably SDP/ WCADA and Prism.

One of the explanations for this is that this indicator (or this result) is not appropriate for the type of individuals being supported by these specialist providers and/or the type of support they were providing. If this was the case, an adjustment should have been made to take this into account during the course of the project. The fact that Prism only provided an engagement and initial support service also needs to be taken into account.

Some project managers were also happy to admit that, with hindsight, mistakes were made in the early stages of the project with participants being enrolled on the wrong type of courses and / or over optimism in terms of the participants being enrolled on course (i.e. they would struggle to complete the course). Such mistakes are not uncommon as a project 'beds in' especially one such as COASTAL which was introducing a new / different type of support for participants. They are however important lessons learnt.

Table 4.1: Distribution of participants gaining qualifications per provider: achievements compared to target

Provider	Target	Actual	% of target achieved*
Bridgend CBC	216	289	134%
Carmarthenshire CC	579	489	84%
Ceredigion CC	192	202	105%
Neath Port Talbot CBC	699	708	101%
Pembrokeshire CC	634	534	84%
City & County of Swansea	751	615	82%
PRISM	516	149	29%
SDP / WCADA	559	114	20%
HMPS Chaplaincy	354	449	127%
PROJECT TOTAL	4,500	3,549	79%

Source: COASTAL Regional Team. *As of August 2014

The table below shows the target and achievement of each provider and the project as a whole in percentage terms (as a proportion of the number of participants engaged). The difference between the target and what was achieved at the point of the analysis is also shown. It is interesting to note that, in the majority of instances, the target was consistent across all providers, 60 per cent. There are however two exceptions with the target being lower for the City & County of Swansea and considerably higher for the HMPS Chaplaincy strand. The target was higher for the Chaplaincy as it was anticipated that part of the process for all participants would be a qualification. As their 'attendance' was virtually guaranteed it was felt appropriate to apply a higher target. The target for Swansea was lower due to the conservative attitude amongst the project service areas.

There was therefore, in the majority of cases, no adjustment in the target to take into account the type of participants that different strands of the project (most notably the cross regional strands) were supporting or the type of activities being undertaken. With hindsight, there should have been adjustment; not enough notice was taken of the chaotic lifestyle of the majority of participants in the substance misuse field.

Table 4.2: Participants gaining qualifications per provider: achievements compared to targets as a percentage of participants engaged

Provider	Target	Actual*	Difference
Bridgend CBC	60%	60%	0%
Carmarthenshire CC	60%	39%	-21%
Ceredigion CC	60%	46%	-14%
Neath Port Talbot CBC	60%	54%	-6%
Pembrokeshire CC	60%	52%	-8%
City & County of Swansea	53%	39%	-14%
PRISM	60%	22%	-38%
SDP / WCADA	60%	11%	-49%
HMPS Chaplaincy	82%	100%	18%
PROJECT TOTAL	60%	43%	-17%

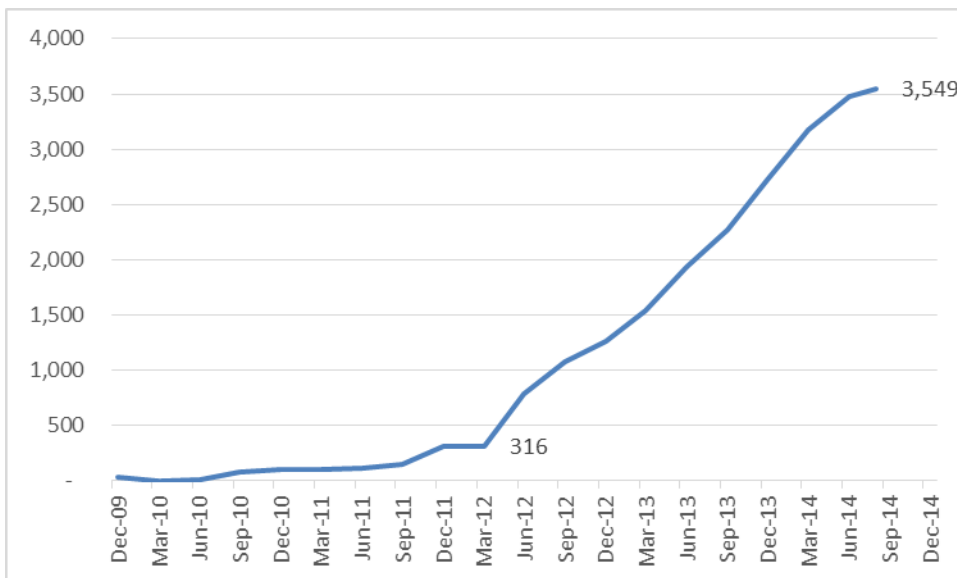
Source: analysis of data provided by the COASTAL Regional Team

*As of August 2014

If we look at the achievements of the providers in percentage terms we see a substantial variance in their figures ranging from 11 per cent to 100 per cent. All but two providers had not achieved their target in percentage terms, although the difference is again most prominent for the Prism and SDP / WCADA strands.

Turning our attention to the rate at which the result has been achieved over the lifetime of the project, the graphic below shows that there was a clear increase in the rate at which the qualification result was being achieved from March 2012 onwards. This is not necessarily unexpected given that time was needed to identify the needs of participants, identify appropriate training and then, of course, undertake that training. The length of time that an individual with serious learning disabilities and/or mental health issues will take to achieve a qualification is substantially greater than the general populace. There have also been issues and delays in securing evidence from education and training facilities which has delayed the reporting of this result; certificates could take six months to arrive, if at all, with many establishments refusing to provide copies to the project and only sending them directly to the participant. There was an understandable reluctance amongst the teams to actually claim qualifications without having the documentary evidence to back up the claim. The fact that increase in the rate of achievement did not happen until three years into the lifetime of the project (from a start date of January 2009) does however still need to be noted.

Figure 4.2: The number of participants achieving a ‘qualification gained’ result over the lifetime of COASTAL (cumulative)



Source: analysis of data provided by the COASTAL Regional Team

It is also relevant to note here the 'depth' of intervention delivered to COASTAL participants. Whilst it may be true that the number of qualifications claimed is below target, recognition should be given to the fact that the vast majority of COASTAL participants had very limited educational background and no qualifications whatsoever prior to their engagement. As a result, they have actually undertaken a journey which has seen them achieve multiple qualifications from various Entry Level courses through Levels 1, 2 and in some cases Level 3 many having achieved a qualification for the first time in their lives. It is however only the highest single qualification which can be claimed per participant. The overall number of qualifications gained is considerably higher, at 4,872.

4.4 Participants gaining other positive outcomes

The project target for the other positive outcome indicator was, as of August 2014, marginally overachieved with **4,624 of participants achieving an 'other positive outcome'** compared to a target of 4,500. The target had however not been achieved in percentage terms; the target was for 60% (4,500/7,500) of participants to achieve an 'other positive outcome' with a rate of 56% (4,624/8,223) being achieved to date. A slightly lower proportion of participants had therefore achieved this result than had been forecast.

This indicator is designed to record the number of participants gaining 'intermediary outcomes' as a result of participation in an ESF-funded project. The intermediary outcomes which can be reported are specified, by WEFO as follows:

- Completing courses (where this does not contribute to the gaining qualifications outcome);
- Entering voluntary work;
- Entering further learning whilst still engaged with the project;
- Gaining part qualifications; or
- Attending a job interview.

These achievements are viewed as part of the journey to achieving final outcomes such as entering paid employment or gaining qualifications.

If we look at the distribution of participants achieving this result per provider (Table 4.3) it is apparent that all but two providers (HMPS Chaplaincy and PRISM) have overachieved against this result target. In the two instances of underachievement, the target has been underachieved possibly due to the nature of the participants being supported and the type of support being provided although the fact that this analysis was based on the situation as it was four months prior to the completion of the projects again needs to be taken into account.

Table 4.3: Distribution of participants achieving ‘other positive outcomes’ per provider: achievements compared to targets

Provider	Target	Actual	% of target achieved*
Bridgend CBC	216	253	117%
Carmarthenshire CC	579	599	103%
Ceredigion CC	192	230	120%
Neath Port Talbot CBC	699	935	134%
Pembrokeshire CC	634	664	105%
City & County of Swansea	751	923	123%
PRISM	516	251	49%
SDP / WCADA	559	639	114%
HMPS Chaplaincy	354	130	37%
PROJECT TOTAL	4500	4624	103%

Source: COASTAL Regional Team. *As of August 2014

The table below shows the target and achievement of each provider and the project as a whole in percentage terms (as a percentage of the number of participants engaged). Again, the target is consistent for all providers except the City & County of Swansea (lower) and HMPS Chaplaincy (higher). The explanation is the same as previously noted. The conservative attitudes in Swansea led to the agreement of lower targets, whilst in the Chaplaincy, the target was initially set at a higher level in the expectation that a much higher proportion of participants would fail to complete the qualification and thereby be claimed as ‘other positive outcomes’. In practice (as per the previous discussion), 100% actually completed the course meaning that the achievement of this outcome was substantially reduced.

Table 4.4: Participants achieving ‘other positive outcomes’ per provider: achievements compared to targets as a percentage of participants engaged

Provider	Target	Actual*	Difference
Bridgend CBC	60%	53%	-8%
Carmarthenshire CC	60%	48%	-12%
Ceredigion CC	60%	53%	-8%
Neath Port Talbot CBC	60%	71%	11%
Pembrokeshire CC	60%	65%	5%
City & County of Swansea	53%	59%	5%
PRISM	60%	37%	-23%
SDP / WCADA	60%	63%	3%
HMPS Chaplaincy	82%	29%	-53%
PROJECT TOTAL	60%	56%	-4%

Source: analysis of data provided by the COASTAL Regional Team

*As of August 2014

The difference between the target and what was achieved is also shown. As previously, this analysis paints a slightly different picture with the proportion of participants achieving the result being lower than anticipated in five instances. The difference is however still greatest in the same two providers.

A review of the rate at which this result has been recorded shows that the rate has been relatively consistent over the lifetime of the project.

4.5 Participants entering further learning

As of August 2014, **1,070 participants had entered further learning**, which is less than the anticipated total of 1,875. In percentage terms, it was forecast that 25% of the participants would enter further learning; as of August 2014, the actual figure was 13%. As one of the outcome indicators, this result can only be achieved after a participant has left the ESF project.

A look at the distribution of participants achieving this result across the providers, we see substantial variation in achievement, ranging from an overachievement in one instance (Neath Port Talbot CBC) to a substantial underachievement to date in others, most notably HMPS Chaplaincy. Neath Port Talbot CBC has provided 33% of the participants achieving this result within the project, with over 50% coming from a combination of Neath Port Talbot CBC and the City and County of Swansea.

One possible explanation is that the discrepancy has arisen due to the differing way in which each partner has been delivering services. The urban areas of Swansea and Neath Port Talbot make it easier to identify a wider range of further learning opportunities, which are sparser in the more rural areas. With the Chaplaincy, the difficulty in tracking participants after discharge makes the collection of evidence to support this outcome problematic.

It should also be noted that this was always seen as an exit outcome which would be targeted at the close of the Project. Whilst the figures used to compile the report were true at that point in time, the exit into Further Learning was expected to dramatically escalate over the final months of the Project.

Table 4.5: Distribution of participants entering further learning per provider: achievements compared to targets

Provider	Target	Actual	% of target achieved*
Bridgend CBC	90	73	81%
Carmarthenshire CC	241	84	35%
Ceredigion CC	80	32	40%
Neath Port Talbot CBC	291	333	114%
Pembrokeshire CC	264	113	43%
City & County of Swansea	354	211	60%
PRISM	215	78	36%
SDP / WCADA	233	138	59%
HMPS Chaplaincy	107	8	7%
PROJECT TOTAL	1,875	1,070	57%

Source: COASTAL Regional Team. *As of August 2014

The table below shows the target and achievement of each provider and the project as a whole in percentage terms (as a percentage of the number of participants engaged). In this instance there is consistency across the providers, all of whom had a target of 25%. Only one provider (Neath Port Talbot CBC) had achieved that target / forecast at the point of the analysis.

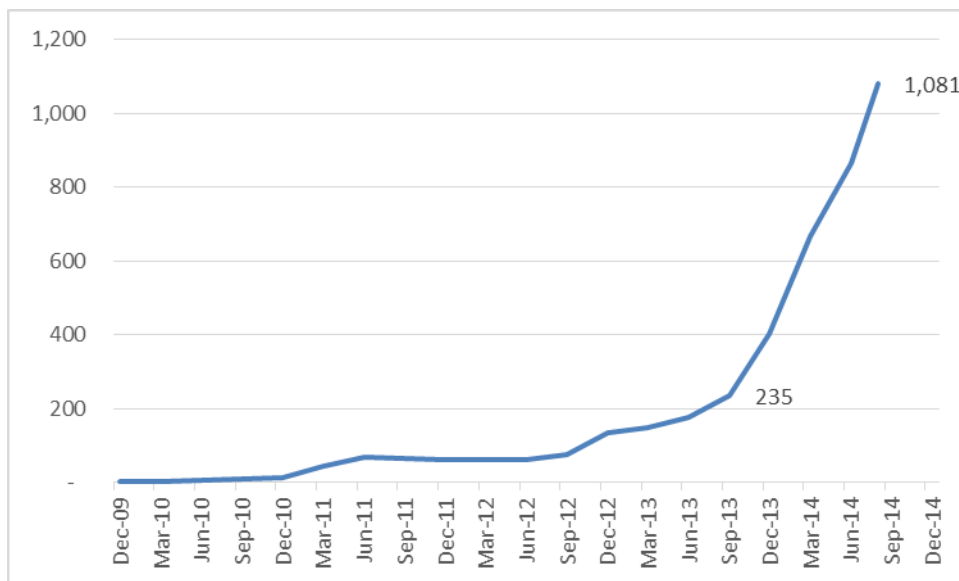
Table 4.6: Participants entering further learning per provider: achievements compared to targets as a percentage of participants engaged

Provider	Target	Actual*	Difference
Bridgend CBC	25%	15%	-10%
Carmarthenshire CC	25%	7%	-18%
Ceredigion CC	25%	7%	-18%
Neath Port Talbot CBC	25%	25%	0%
Pembrokeshire CC	25%	11%	-14%
City & County of Swansea	25%	13%	-12%
PRISM	25%	11%	-14%
SDP / WCADA	25%	14%	-11%
HMPS Chaplaincy	25%	2%	-23%
PROJECT TOTAL	25%	13%	-12%

Source: analysis of data provided by the COASTAL Regional Team
 *As of August 2014

Turning our attention to the rate at which the result has been achieved over the lifetime of the project, the graphic below shows that there was a clear increase in the rate at which the further learning result was being achieved from September 2013 onwards. This is again not unexpected given that this result was recorded when participants exited the project and the tendency for participants to be supported by the project for a number of years.

Figure 4.3: The number of participants entering further learning over the lifetime of COASTAL (cumulative)



Source: analysis of data provided by the COASTAL Regional Team

Again, it should be noted here that achievement against this result was expected to continue to escalate at a similar rate until the end of the project, meaning that it was anticipated that the overall target would almost certainly have been over-achieved by the close of the project.

4.6 Participants entering employment

The target (revised) for this indicator was overachieved, with **832 participants entering employment** compared to a target of 750. Ten per cent of participants achieved this result which is the same as was forecast. For this indicator, employment includes self-employment and can be full-time or part-time. However, employment must involve a minimum of 16 hours' work a week and must be paid employment.

In terms of numbers, the City and County of Swansea is the highest achiever generating 181 employment results, 22% of the total. SDP / WCADA are the clearest underachievers, although they would argue because this indicator was inappropriate for the majority of participants that they were working with. The figures for Bridgend CBC are eye catching, showing a considerable over achievement on their part which suggests a clear focus on achieving this outcome within the delivery of COASTAL in that area.

Table 4.7: Distribution of participants entering employment per provider: achievements compared to targets

Provider	Target	Actual	% of target achieved*
Bridgend CBC	36	84	233%
Carmarthenshire CC	97	141	145%
Ceredigion CC	32	48	150%
Neath Port Talbot CBC	116	124	107%
Pembrokeshire CC	106	100	94%
City & County of Swansea	142	181	127%
PRISM	86	72	84%
SDP / WCADA	93	40	43%
HMPS Chaplaincy	42	42	100%
PROJECT TOTAL	750	832	111%

Source: COASTAL Regional Team. *As of August 2014

If we look at the target and achievement of each provider as a percentage of the participants engaged, we see that there was consistency in the target for each provider (10%). In the main, at the point of the analysis providers were within 1% of the target but with Bridgend CBC and SDP / WCADA again standing out for opposite reasons.

Table 4.8: Participants entering employment per provider: achievements compared to targets as a percentage of participants engaged

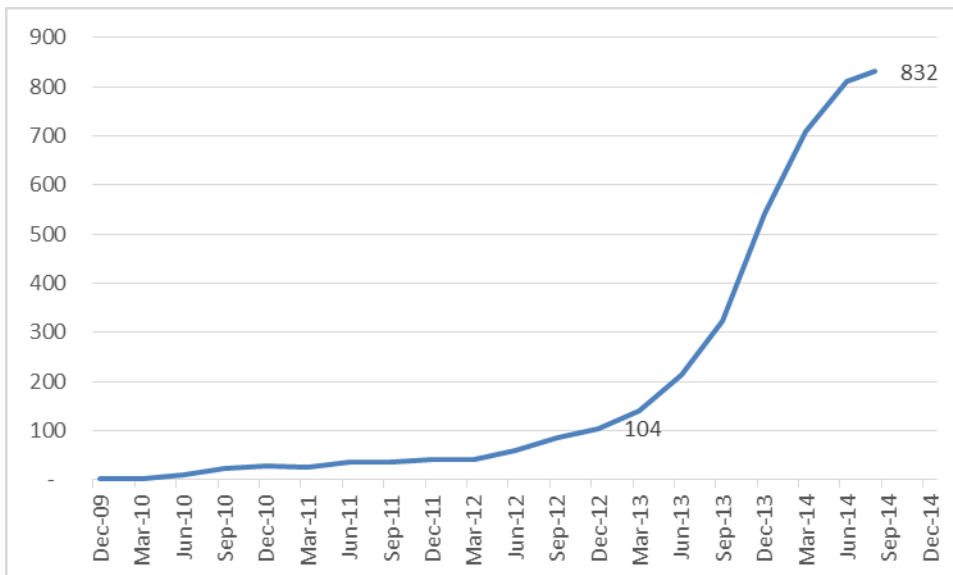
Provider	Target	Actual*	Difference
Bridgend CBC	10%	17%	7%
Carmarthenshire CC	10%	11%	1%
Ceredigion CC	10%	11%	1%
Neath Port Talbot CBC	10%	9%	-1%
Pembrokeshire CC	10%	10%	0%
City & County of Swansea	10%	11%	1%
PRISM	10%	11%	1%
SDP / WCADA	10%	4%	-6%
HMPS Chaplaincy	10%	9%	0%
PROJECT TOTAL	10%	10%	0%

Source: analysis of data provided by the COASTAL Regional Team

*As of August 2014

Turning our attention to the rate at which the result has been achieved over the lifetime of the project, the graph below again shows that there was a clear increase in the rate at which the result was being achieved post December 2012. Again, this is not necessarily unexpected given that this was an exit outcome and given the nature of the target group. However, as discussed later in this report, the introduction of an action plan to ensure that this target was achieved in 2013 is likely to have contributed to this increase in the rate at which employment results were being achieved (please refer to section 9.3.2 of the report).

Figure 4.4: The number of participants entering employment over the lifetime of COASTAL (cumulative)



Source: analysis of data provided by the COASTAL Regional Team

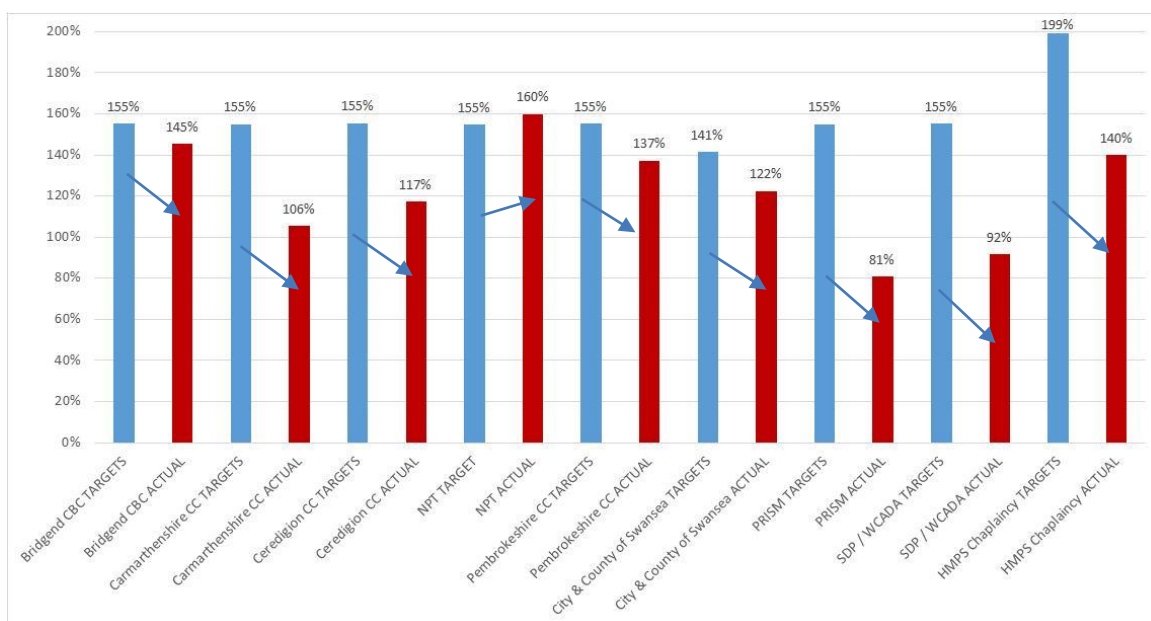
4.7 The percentage of participants achieving a result

The percentage of participants that achieve a result is a useful indication of how effectively COASTAL has been working with its participants. Whilst the analysis does not take into account anything about the type of participants being supported (for example, the extent of the issues that need to be overcome before they can achieve a positive outcome), it is also a useful way of comparing the performance of different elements of the project.

For the COASTAL project as a whole, 10,075 results had been recorded at the point of the analysis, which represents 123 per cent of all participants engaged⁶. This is lower than the number that had been forecast (i.e. the target) which was 11,625 or 155 per cent of all participants although the fact that the project was not closing for a further four months again needs to be taken into account.

The graph below illustrates the percentage achieved compared to the target for each provider. As can be seen the percentage achieved is lower than the target in all but one case (Neath Port Talbot) suggesting that each provider has found it more difficult than anticipated to achieve positive results.

Figure 4.5: Percentage of participants achieving a positive result per provider: actual and target

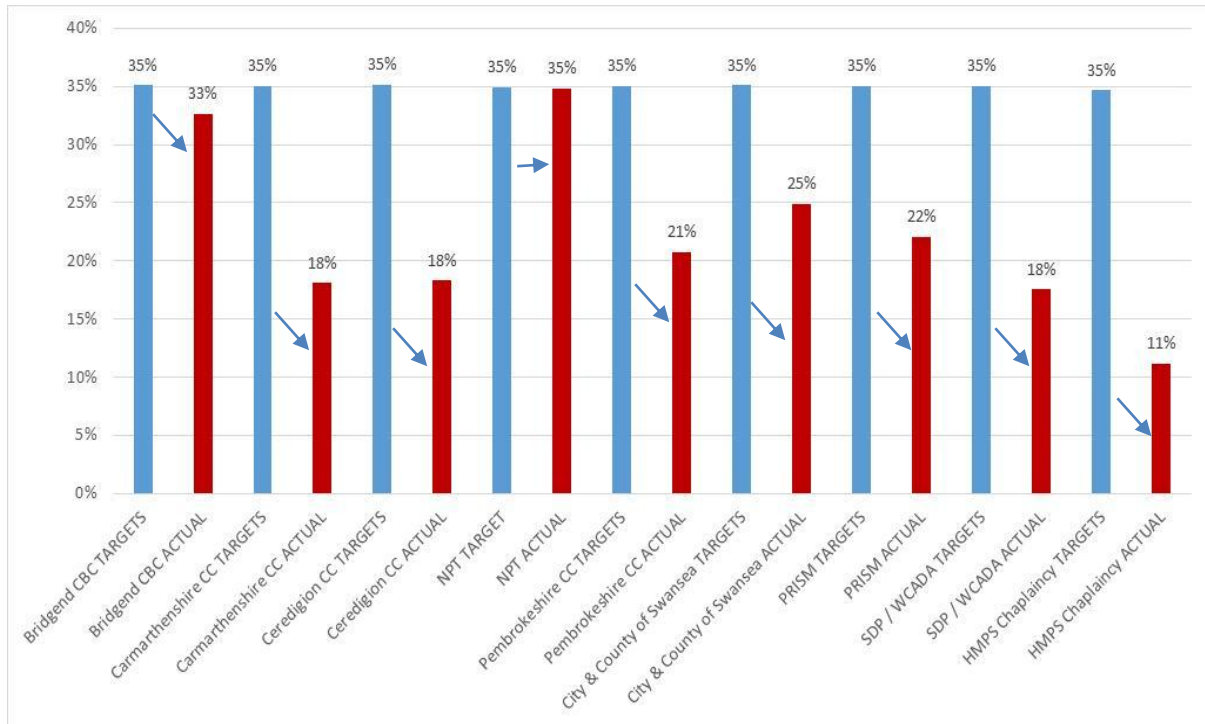


Source: analysis of data provided by the COASTAL Regional Team. As of August 2014.

If we look at just the exit outcomes (entering further learning or employment) the percentages are, as one would expect, lower although the pattern is the same.

⁶ This figure is in excess of 100 per cent because participants could achieve multiple results. Only one exit outcome (entering further learning or employment) could however be recorded per participant.

Figure 4.6: Percentage of participants achieving an exit outcome per provider: actual and target



Source: analysis of data provided by the COASTAL Regional Team. As of August 2014.

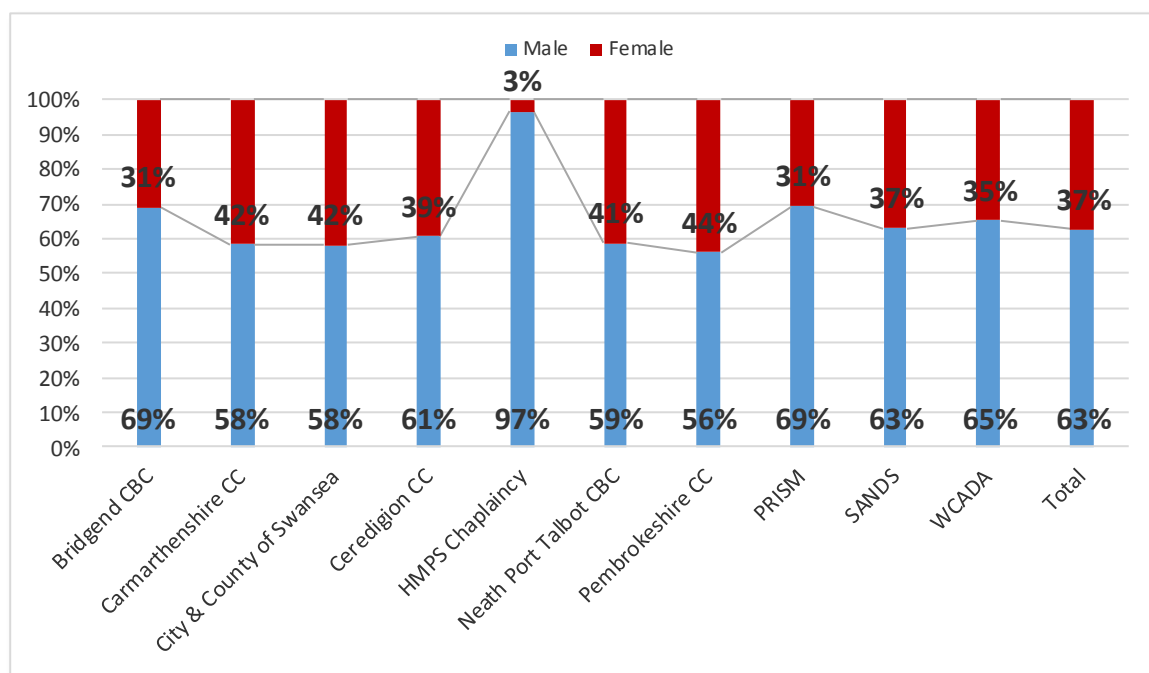
4.8 Equalities data

A range of characteristics data was collected for COASTAL which is analysed below.

4.8.1 Gender

In terms of gender, 63% of COASTAL participants were male and 37% female. The graphic overleaf shows the gender split per contractor as well as for the project as a whole. It shows that the gender split varies considerably between providers, ranging from 31% female in Bridgend to 44% female in Pembrokeshire. The proportion of females is particularly low for the HMP5 Chaplaincy project due to the focus of that project being exclusively on the prison for men in Swansea, although the prison does have a very small temporary facility for female prisoners, some of whom have accessed the services of the Project.

Figure 4.7: Gender of COASTAL participants



Source: analysis of data provided by the COASTAL Regional Team

Compared to Census 2011 data for those with ‘long terms health issues or disability’ (table 4.9) the proportions of female COASTAL participants seems low.

Table 4.9: The proportion of the population describing themselves as having ‘long terms health issues or disability’, 2011 Census

	Male	Female
Bridgend	49%	51%
Carmarthenshire	48%	52%
Ceredigion	49%	51%
Neath Port Talbot	49%	51%
Pembrokeshire	48%	52%
Swansea	49%	51%
COASTAL AREA	49%	51%

Source: 2011 census

Table 4.10 shows the proportion of participants entering further learning or employment split by gender. For COASTAL as a whole, the analysis shows that a higher proportion of female participants have entered further learning. The opposite is however true in terms of participants entering employment. The reasons for this are unclear. It is interesting to note however that the results are not consistent across the project with males being more likely to achieve both results in Bridgend for example.

Table 4.10: Gender of COASTAL participants achieving the results: entering further learning and entering employment

	Further learning		Employment	
	Male	Female	Male	Female
Bridgend CBC	16%	14%	20%	13%
Carmarthenshire CC	6%	8%	12%	10%
City & County of Swansea	12%	16%	14%	8%
Ceredigion CC	6%	9%	11%	11%
HMPS Chaplaincy	2%	0%	9%	13%
Neath Port Talbot CBC	22%	30%	11%	8%
Pembrokeshire CC	10%	12%	11%	8%
PRISM	10%	16%	12%	8%
SANDS	10%	9%	5%	8%
WCADA	15%	14%	3%	2%
COASTAL PROJECT	12%	16%	11%	8%

Source: analysis of data provided by the COASTAL Regional Team

The table below shows the proportion of participants achieving an exit outcome (entering employment or further learning) combined, split by gender. As shown, when the results are combined there is little difference in the proportion of male and female participants achieving an exit outcome (24% and 23%) suggesting that, for the project as a whole, it is equally likely that males or females will achieve an exit outcome. There is however again some variance amongst the contractors with, for example, males being more likely to achieve an exit outcome in Bridgend CBC and females being more likely in Neath Port Talbot CBC. The reasons for this are again unclear.

Table 4.11: Gender of COASTAL participants achieving an exit outcome – entering further learning or employment

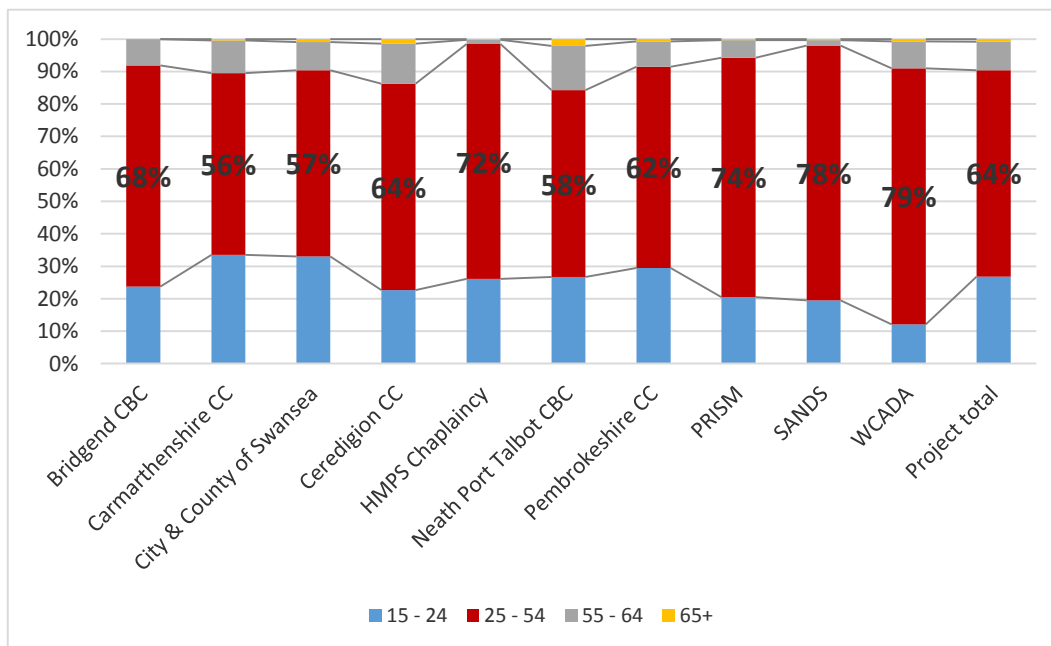
	Male	Female
Bridgend CBC	35%	26%
Carmarthenshire CC	18%	18%
City & County of Swansea	27%	24%
Ceredigion CC	17%	20%
HMPS Chaplaincy	11%	13%
Neath Port Talbot CBC	33%	38%
Pembrokeshire CC	22%	20%
PRISM	21%	24%
SANDS	15%	18%
WCADA	19%	17%
COASTAL PROJECT	23%	24%

Source: analysis of data provided by the COASTAL Regional Team

4.8.2 Age group

As shown by Figure 4.8, 64 per cent (5,227/8,223) of COASTAL participants were in the 25 to 54 years old age group. This was the largest age group for all contractors, although the percentage does vary from a high of 79 per cent (WCADA) to a low of 56% (Carmarthenshire CC). This suggest that the demand for the services being provided by COASTAL has been greater in that age group although the fact that the age bands are unequal and that a larger proportion of the working population is in this age group needs to be taken into account.

Figure 4.8: Age group of COASTAL participants



Source: analysis of data provided by the COASTAL Regional Team

The tables overleaf show the proportion of participants achieving the exit outcomes per age category, firstly for participants entering learning and employment separately and then for those results combined. The age category 65+ has been excluded from the analysis due to the small number of participants in that age group.

As was the case in the analysis of these results by gender, when the results are combined, there is little difference between the age categories, with those in the 15-24 and 55-64 age group being only slightly more likely to have achieved an exit outcome compared to those in the 25-54 group (table 4.12). The variance between the different contractors should however be noted. For example, 41% of participants in the 55-64 age group achieved an exit outcome compared to just 7% in Carmarthenshire.

Table 4.12: Age group of COASTAL participants achieving an exit outcome: entering further learning or employment, combined

	Age group		
	15 - 24	25 - 54	55 - 64
Bridgend CBC	33%	31%	41%
Carmarthenshire CC	22%	18%	7%
City & County of Swansea	30%	23%	23%
Ceredigion CC	21%	18%	13%
HMPS Chaplaincy	15%	10%	17%
Neath Port Talbot CBC	27%	35%	46%
Pembrokeshire CC	21%	21%	19%
PRISM	22%	22%	24%
SANDS	12%	17%	40%
WCADA	18%	19%	13%
COASTAL PROJECT	24%	22%	25%

Source: analysis of data provided by the COASTAL Regional Team

When we look at the results separately however (tables 4.13 and 4.14) it shows that a higher proportion of those in the older age group (55-64) have entered further learning than their younger counterparts (18% compared to 13% and 12%). The opposite is however true when we look at the proportion of participants entering employment per group, with those in the youngest age group more likely to achieve that result than their 55-64 age group counterparts (12% compared to 7%). One possible explanation for this is that it has been more difficult to find employment opportunities for participants in the older age group. Again, the variance between the different contractors should also be noted.

Table 4.13: Age group of COASTAL participants achieving the results: entering further learning

	Age group		
	15 - 24	25 - 54	55 - 64
Bridgend CBC	16%	14%	23%
Carmarthenshire CC	9%	6%	3%
City & County of Swansea	16%	13%	17%
Ceredigion CC	8%	6%	9%
HMPS Chaplaincy	3%	1%	17%
Neath Port Talbot CBC	18%	24%	39%
Pembrokeshire CC	13%	11%	7%
PRISM	8%	13%	11%
SANDS	7%	10%	40%
WCADA	13%	16%	10%
COASTAL PROJECT	12%	13%	18%

Source: analysis of data provided by the COASTAL Regional Team

Table 4.14: Age group of COASTAL participants achieving the results: entering employment

	Age group		
	15 - 24	25 - 54	55 - 64
Bridgend CBC	18%	17%	18%
Carmarthenshire CC	13%	12%	4%
City & County of Swansea	14%	11%	7%
Ceredigion CC	13%	12%	4%
HMPS Chaplaincy	12%	9%	0%
Neath Port Talbot CBC	9%	10%	7%
Pembrokeshire CC	9%	10%	11%
PRISM	14%	10%	14%
SANDS	5%	7%	0%
WCADA	6%	3%	3%
COASTAL PROJECT	12%	10%	7%

Source: analysis of data provided by the COASTAL Regional Team

4.8.3 Ethnicity

Three per cent (235/8,223) of COASTAL participants were recorded as being from a black or minority ethnic group (BME) although there was some variance in this figure across the contractors (from a high of 5% in Swansea to a low of 2% for multiple contractors). These proportions are consistent with the proportion from BME groups in the area; according to the 2011 Census, around 3% of the population in the COASTAL area are from a BME group. Given the small numbers, no analysis of the proportion of those in BME groups achieving the exit outcomes had been undertaken.

4.9 Summing up

It is important to acknowledge that the analysis in this chapter is based on data that was collected before the end of the project (August 2014). The situation could therefore conceivably change before the end of the project as participant files are closed and additional results are reported.

The findings of the analysis of the data that was available has in many respects been mixed with the project achieving its targets in some respects (most notably in terms of the number of participants engaged and the number entering employment) but underachieving, at the point of the analysis, against others (the number of participants gaining qualifications and entering further learning). When the targets are assessed as a proportion of the participants engaged (for example, the proportion of participants entering employment, there has been marginal underachievement in all but one instance, (the proportion of participants entering employment).

Some of the reasons for this are discussed in subsequent chapters of this report. It is also important to be aware that the targets being discussed here were substantially revised over the course of the project, with all original targets being reduced (some considerably) with the exception of the target for the number of participants entering further learning which was increased slightly. The analysis has also found that 'performance' has varied substantially amongst the contractors. This is an indication of how varied COASTAL has been in terms of how it has been delivered across the regions; another matter that is discussed in greater detail later in subsequent chapters.

5 Cost-benefit analysis

Cost-benefit analysis (CBA) is a systematic approach to estimating the benefits of a particular project or programme, and comparing them against the costs of delivering it. A CBA is a useful tool in helping us to understand the relationship between inputs and outputs. This chapter sets out how the CBA of COASTAL was developed, going on to explore the results of the analysis.

Key points

- The overall CBA of COASTAL suggests that for every one pound invested delivered a total of £1.09 benefits.
- The analysis should be interpreted with caution: the model incorporates a narrow definition of an outcome, and contains a number of conservative assumptions that are likely to under-estimate the benefits of COASTAL.
- Within this analysis, COASTAL slightly underperforms against recent CBAs of roughly comparable programmes. A likely explanation is that those initiatives incorporated a stronger focus on employment outcomes in their design and delivery.

5.1 Introduction

The framework that we have used for this analysis draws from the UK Treasury's *Green Book* on economic impact assessment.⁷ Where there is insufficient information to do so, a series of assumptions were drawn from benchmarks appearing in the DWP's *Social Cost-Benefit Framework* for assessing the impact of employment programmes.⁸ A detailed summary of the assumptions contained within the model can be seen in Appendix 5 which accompanies this chapter.

5.1.1 Interpreting the CBA

Before interpreting the final analysis, it is important to be clear on how the model has been put together, and the potential limitations contained within such an approach.

The figures are likely to under-estimate the economic benefits of COASTAL. Where assumptions have been used, a conservative benchmark has been chosen in each instance in order to ensure that the analysis stands up to independent scrutiny. The analysis also represents a snapshot in time, relying on data that is already out of date. There may have been subsequent positive outcomes, now and into the future, that are not reflected within this analysis.

⁷<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/the-green-book-appraisal-and-evaluation-in-central-government>

⁸ <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/the-dwp-social-cost-benefit-analysis-framework-wp86>

The model incorporates a narrow and specific definition of what constitutes an outcome. The Treasury and DWP frameworks that we have based this analysis on seek to understand the performance of targeted employment programmes. These frameworks overlook softer outcomes, such as improvements in confidence, health or breaking down social isolation, in favour of harder outcomes such as successful transitions into employment or training. The objectives of COASTAL are broader than just promoting employment and training outcomes, and these aspects are unfortunately not reflected within this analysis. It does not take into account the full breadth of provision, such as the potential benefits associated with overcoming health barriers to work.

Despite the limitations, the analysis is instructive and valuable. The model holds high internal consistency, in that each project within COASTAL has been treated equally in the analysis. This can help direct further investigation that explores the reasons why some projects appear to have delivered more outputs for less inputs. The CBA could also be used as a rough benchmark to compare with other employment programmes – although again comparisons should be interpreted with caution.

In summary, the following analysis should be viewed as an indicative, and not a definitive statement of the performance of COASTAL.

5.2 COASTAL CBA

Table 5.1: cost, benefit and CBA results for COASTAL

Total Costs	Total Benefits	CBA
£38,731,462	£42,093,281	£1.09

Source: analysis of data provided by the COASTAL Regional Team

The analysis suggests that for COASTAL as a whole, for every pound invested the project gave a positive return of £1.09.

5.2.1 Total cost estimations

The costs apportioned were drawn from the COASTAL Financial Report for August 2014. These figures include actuals for both ESF and matched funds.

5.2.2 Total benefit estimations

Estimations of the total benefits draw on a range of information, including management and survey data that highlighted the positive outcomes participants had achieved. These outcomes included:

- Successful transitions into employment, and
- Participants gaining a qualification.

We then mapped the range of potential benefits that could be gained from such outcomes, including:

- Savings to the exchequer across welfare and health expenditure;
- Increased productivity within the local economy; and
- Individual benefits, including increased earnings.

We then deducted individual participant costs associated with employment from these figures, including increased childcare and travel costs associated with employment.

Where there was insufficient data to underpin a potential benefit, a number of assumptions were made. Each assumption carries the risk that the stated value is greater or lesser than the true benefit or cost of each transaction. In order to ensure robustness, assumptions were drawn from the best available comparable data, or conservative benchmarks set out by the DWP. A comprehensive list of assumptions can be found in Appendix 5.

Once all the information was gathered, the CBA simply divides the total benefits by the total costs to arrive at a cost-benefit ratio.

5.3 Comparison with other employability programmes

There are a number of employment programmes that have been assessed using a similar CBA framework. We should be cautious about drawing comparisons across assessments, as each CBA will have been constructed slightly differently, and each CBA will evaluate a unique initiative operating within a different context. They can however provide a *rough* benchmark with which to judge the performance of COASTAL – apples and pears are, after all, both fruit.

The *Pathways to Work* programme delivered by the DWP sought to provide support to those claiming Incapacity Benefit (IB) and Severe Disablement Allowance (SDA). The programme included a range of entitlements and sanctions that encouraged people towards employment. An analysis conducted by the Institute for Fiscal Studies⁹ suggested that a pilot of the programme was cost effective, incurring a saving of upwards of £1.51 to the Exchequer for every pound invested. The research on these estimations contained a number of biases, including the way in which costs were calculated – which underestimated the on-costs of running the programme – and included outcomes of those inquiring about the programme but not actually enrolling.¹⁰ A subsequent report published by the National Audit Office in 2010 suggested the programme underperformed against other comparable initiatives and provided poor value for money.¹¹

⁹<http://webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/20130128102031/http://research.dwp.gov.uk/asd/asd5/rports2007-2008/rrep498.pdf>

¹⁰<http://www.nao.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2010/05/101121.pdf>

¹¹<http://www.nao.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2010/05/101121.pdf>

The *New Deal for Disabled People* (NDDP) was a New Labour initiative focused at people claiming incapacity benefits. It provided focused support including job search, training and confidence building activities. DWP research suggested the cost savings of the programme varied between £1.71 and £2.26, depending on the provider, for each pound spent on delivering the NDDP.¹² An analysis of a supported employment programme working with people with profound learning difficulties in Kent found a net saving of £1.12 to the Exchequer for every pound invested.¹³ This analysis compared the costs of alternative provision, and suggested that that the programme was cheaper than day-care arrangements. This model assumes however that supported employment is equally as effective as day-care in supporting people with learning difficulties.

On face value, at £1.09 overall, COASTAL slightly underperformed against these initiatives. These programmes however appear to have a significant focus on employment outcomes, even though they worked with a diverse range of populations. We should be wary, however, of drawing too much from this comparison. Although the models underpinning each CBA included a range of similar variables, including savings to the Exchequer, each analysis contains a unique set of limitations and biases that are impossible to determine without revisiting and reanalysing the original data.

¹²<http://webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/20130128102031/http://research.dwp.gov.uk/asd/asd5/rports2007-2008/rrep431.pdf>

¹³http://base-uk.org/sites/base-uk.org/files/document-archive/3684-The%20Cost/Benefit%20Argument/kentcba_-_final_sept2011.pdf

6 Analysis of the survey of participants

This chapter explores the responses of COASTAL participants that were interviewed between 2011 and 2014. The aim of the survey was to gather a range of information, including the motivations, experiences and outcomes of participants. The analysis of subsequent data aims to increase our understanding of the COASTAL project from participant's perspectives. Through a number of quantitative and qualitative techniques, the chapter seeks to identify and describe factors such as the benefits of participation, potential gaps in provision, and the period of support they received. Throughout the chapter, we consider the implications of findings for policy and practice.

Key points

- Telephone interviews were undertaken with 247 participants selected at random, and 62 participants purposively sampled from across the COASTAL region between 2011 and 2014.
- Participants who reported no significant barrier to employment were the most likely to secure employment and those who reported drugs and alcohol dependency were the least.
- There was a strong and significant relationship between participant's perceived distance from the labour market, and employment outcomes, suggesting that how participants perceive themselves (i.e. their self-confidence) can have a big bearing on outcomes.
- Twenty-nine per cent of respondents who secured an employment outcome reported that improvements in confidence brought about by COASTAL participation was the main reason why they moved into work.
- The importance of self-efficacy highlighted within responses suggests that future service development should seek to build on good practice across COASTAL provision in supporting and building participant's confidence.

6.1 Introduction

The analysis draws upon information provided by 309 COASTAL participants through telephone interviews collected across four waves. The first was conducted between October and November 2011 (30 interviews), the second between August and October 2012 (120 interviews), and the third between July and November 2014 (97 interviews). These waves selected participants randomly from across the region. A fourth wave of 62 participants were selected by projects because they were 'high achievers', in that they had benefited a great deal from participation. For details of the composition of the sample, the baseline characteristics and how the data was analysed, please refer to Appendix 4.

6.2 Reasons participants said they were being supported

Participants sought support for a diverse range of reasons. We asked participants to give some details about themselves and why they approached COASTAL: *“Could you tell me a little bit about yourself, the kind of support that you’ve received and how long you have been receiving support”*. The following themes emerged from the participant’s responses:

Mental Health

Mental health was a contributing factor for many participants seeking support ($n = 61$). Participants who stated mental health as an issue often stated that they were referred to COASTAL provision by a clinician, either their doctor or through mental health teams:

“I’m 50 this year and for most of my career I’ve been a financial advisor. In January 2010, I had a road traffic accident which was an 80-90 mile an hour collision. I had a suspected broken neck, however I walked away from it and I am walking and talking, however mentally it affected me drastically. I was / am diagnosed with Post Traumatic Stress Disorder and although I went back to work soon afterwards it was evident things weren’t right. After six months I realised I couldn’t continue working and in effect gave up my job and then I moved house to get away from the scene of the accident. I moved from Hereford to South Wales and even though I moved I still had major issues still common with PTSS. In early 2012 I was referred to the Mental Health team where they talked to me about COASTAL.”

Alcohol and Drug Dependency

Alcohol and drug dependency was also a significant factor for many participants ($n = 49$). The precise nature and severity of these issues were difficult to determine for all respondents, with some reporting more detail than others. It was clear, however, that some respondents were dealing with a range of significant issues associated with alcohol and drug dependency:

“...me and my husband had drinking issues, it was making me violent as I was drinking too much, as well as my husband. I wanted support with sorting out my anger and drink issues...”

Disabilities

Physical and learning disabilities presented a significant barrier to work that led many participants to COASTAL provision ($n = 73$). There were significant variation in the types of disability experienced and reported by participants, including Downs Syndrome and Quadriplegia:

“ [Name] has autism and is very vulnerable. Her involvement with COASTAL was getting some travel training with a view to improving her independence.” (Interview with mother).

“I’m involved with xxxxxxx Centre, I was there as a service user before COASTAL and got involved in a project going to schools raising awareness of disabilities. When I was no longer a service user of xxxxxx I became involved as a volunteer in a project helping people who may have problems using their computers. I got involved with COASTAL raising disability awareness and they’ve allowed me to complete my Level 2 training to teach what we know to businesses too as well as schools - raising awareness of disabilities. I have Cerebral Palsy and I’m quadriplegic, I have to rely on an electric chair for everyday tasks.”

Out of Work

Many respondents simply reported that they had been out of work and were seeking support (n = 56). A significant proportion of those stated that they had been referred by the Job Centre:

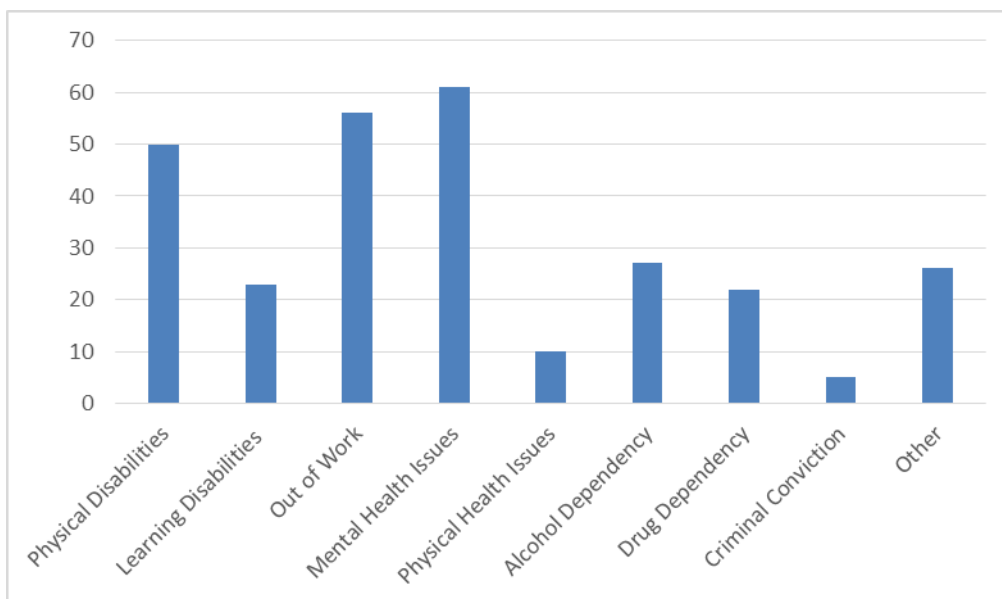
“I was out of work for a number of years, and heard about COASTAL through Working Links [Job Centre]”

Health

Health issues were reported by a number of participants as the reason why they were out of work and seeking support (n = 10):

“...I’m 60 years old and suffered a stroke about a year and a half ago... when I recovered my social worker recommended me to go along to COASTAL...”

Figure 6.1: The reasons the participants identified when asked to explain why they were being supported by COASTAL (coded)



N = 280. Note: Total is greater than 247 participants in the survey as some respondents provided multiple reasons for engaging with COASTAL.

As illustrated in figure 6.1, the most common (modal) reason given for receiving support from COASTAL were mental health issues, physical and learning disabilities and being out of work. Some participants reported more than one reason for seeking support ($n = 33$):

“...because I have a long history of drug abuse, I'm addicted to methadone and I'm also bi-polar...”

This analysis suggests that participants accessing COASTAL services are dealing with very significant and multiple barriers to employment. It is important to note however, that the analysis is likely to under-report the prevalence of issues faced by participants. The question asks respondents to offer confidential and sensitive information that they may not wish to share with a stranger. It is also likely that many respondents are dealing with more than one issue (comorbidity) when finding employment. Many barriers, particularly around mental health and well-being, may be undiagnosed or unrecognised for long periods, a factor that this survey is not sensitive to.

Co-morbidity and Unemployment

Those who are dealing with drug and alcohol dependency are also likely to be experiencing mental health issues. Drugs and alcohol both have pharmacological effects, alcohol is a depressive narcotic and there is a causal link between alcohol and drug misuse and mental health issues. The association and correlation between alcohol, drugs and depression has long been recognised (see Anderson, P. 2009¹⁴, or Silverstone, P. and Salsali, M. 2003¹⁵). Dual diagnosis, which describes the co-diagnosis of both substance misuse and mental health issues, is recognised as an issue by the UK Centre for Mental Health, DrugScope and UK Drug Policy Commission¹⁶. Key statistics include:

- Seventy-five per cent of users of drug services and 85% of users of alcohol services were experiencing mental health problems;
- Thirty per cent of the drug treatment population and over 50% of those in treatment for alcohol problems had ‘multiple morbidity’;
- Thirty-eight per cent of drug users with a psychiatric disorder were receiving no treatment for their mental health problem;
- Forty-four per cent of mental health service users either reported drug use or were assessed to have used alcohol at hazardous or harmful levels in the past year.

¹⁴ Anderson, P. (2009) *Causal Relationship Between Alcohol and Depression May Start with Alcohol Abuse* Medscape Medical News

¹⁵ Silverstone P. & Salsali M. (2003) *Low self-esteem and psychiatric patients: Part I – The relationship between low self-esteem and psychiatric diagnosis* Annals of General Hospital Psychiatry 2:2

¹⁶ Weaver, T. et al;(2002) *The 2002 Co-morbidity of Substance Misuse and Mental Illness Collaborative study.*

Long-term unemployment is itself likely to cause other issues, such as poor mental health. A recent study found that¹⁷:

- Long-term unemployment has large negative effects on mental health;
- Short-term unemployment does not significantly harm mental health;
- Those with more education suffer a larger emotional penalty for being long-term unemployed;
- Finally, evaluators and public policy analysts should be mindful of the support needed by those who are long-term unemployed and the costs.

This final point is especially important for COASTAL as it is not simply an employability project but a hybrid of both social care and employability. These findings also demonstrated the complex support needs of those supported by COASTAL.

Reasons for accessing COASTAL Services and Outcomes

Statistical analysis of responses sought to explore if there is a relationship between barriers to employment and the likelihood of achieving positive outcomes. It should be stressed that the outcome in this instance is narrowly defined as securing employment. Analysis demonstrates that there is significant variation in the likelihood of people achieving employment outcomes depending on the type of barrier they experience, $\chi^2 (4) 12.047, p = 0.017$.¹⁸ Those who reported no significant barriers to employment and were just looking for work were the most likely to obtain employment (Odds Ratio: 45.2%). Those who were least likely, were participants that reported drug and alcohol dependency (Odds Ratio: 3.2%).

Table: 6.4: Barriers and the likelihood of gaining employment

Type of Barrier	Odds Ratio
Out of work	45.2%
Physical and learning disabilities	32.3%
Physical and mental health issues	9.7%
Other	9.7%
Drug and alcohol dependency	3.2%

N = 217

¹⁷ Goldsmith, A. H., Veum, J. R., & Darity, Jr., W. (1997). Unemployment, joblessness, psychological well-being and self-esteem: Theory and evidence. *Journal of SocioEconomics*, 26(2), 133-158.

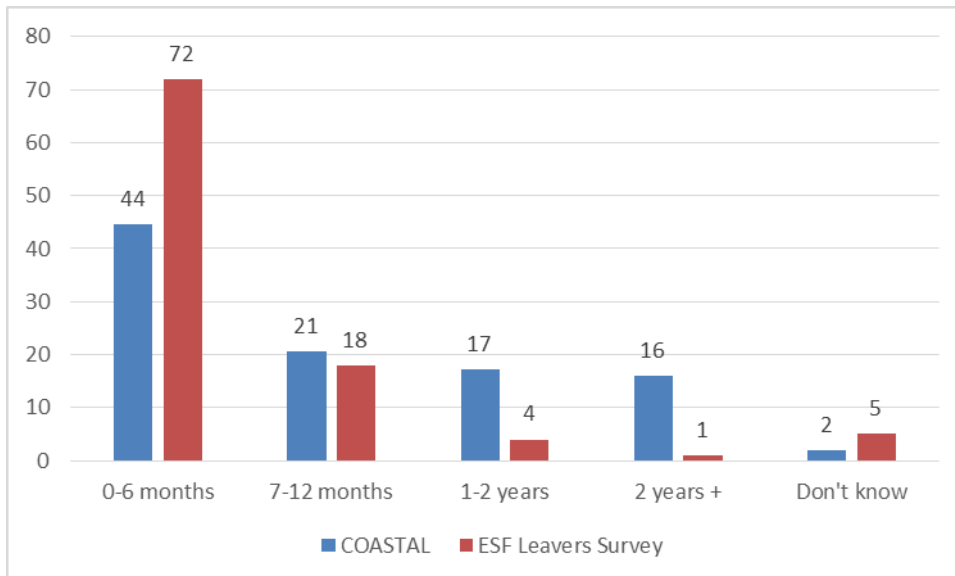
<http://www.apa.org/pi/ses/resources/indicator/2012/04/unemployment.aspx>

¹⁸ Chi Squared, a statistical model that allows you to determine whether there is a significant difference between the expected frequencies and the observed frequencies in one or more categories.

6.3 Period of support

Participants were asked to share how long they had been receiving support from COASTAL. The modal response of respondents (44%) stated that they were receiving support for between 0-6 months. A further 16% stated that they were accessing services for more than two years.

Figure 6.2: Length of support identified by COASTAL participants interviewed in 2012 and 2013 compared to the findings of the ESF Leavers Survey 2010



COASTAL N = 263; ESF Survey N = 3,182

When comparing this data to the ESF Leavers Survey (2010) it appears that on average, COASTAL works with participants over longer periods of time.¹⁹ The ESF Leavers Survey explored the employment transitions with ESF project leavers, observing that 90% of participants attended for under a year. This compares with 65% of those accessing COASTAL services.

We must be cautious in our interpretation of the two data sets, as the ESF Leavers Survey incorporates a range of programmes with differing aims and client groups. The variation between the two analyses may be explained in part by the characteristics of COASTAL participants, who are typically those furthest from the labour market and dealing with a number of potentially difficult barriers to employment.

Variation may also be explained in part by programmatic differences, that COASTAL services were delivered with longer-term support in mind. This does raise an important question around the efficacy of long-term provision: does working with people over the longer-term necessarily lead to similarly successful outcomes?

¹⁹ This survey report assesses outcomes for people leaving ESF projects:

<http://wefo.wales.gov.uk/publications/publications/monitoringevaluation/programmevaluations/2010esfleavers/?lang=en>

Analysis exploring the period of support and employment outcomes found that there was no significant correlation ($r = .101$, $p = .117$). This suggests that there is no relationship between the two, that period of support does not necessarily increase or decrease the likelihood of securing an employment outcome.

Further statistical analysis sought to determine if the reason participants accessed COASTAL services impacted on the period of support they received. The analysis returned a weak and insignificant result, suggesting that no correlation exists between the two factors ($r = .117$, $p = .086$). This suggests that there may be other factors determining the period of support participants sought and received, such as perceived confidence of participants in their readiness to work.

6.4 The benefits identified by participants

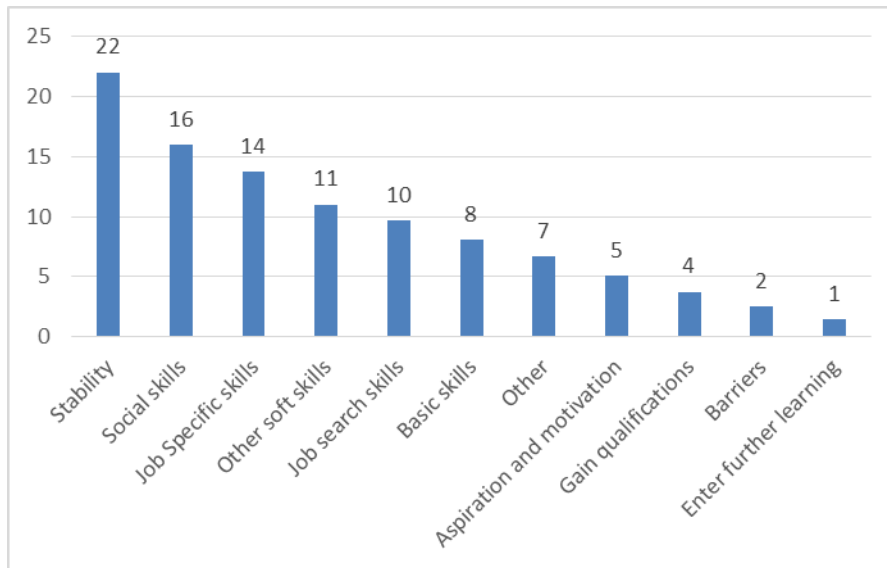
Interviewees were asked to describe what they perceived to be the main benefit of the support they were receiving. Their responses were subsequently coded into the following categories²⁰:

- *Job specific skills* - skills and experience necessary to get a job
- *Aspiration & motivation* – knowing what you want to do and believe you can do it
- *Job-search skills* – using a computer, preparation of CV, interview skills etc.
- *Stability* – improvements to day-to-day lives
- *Basic skills* – literacy, IT, numeracy, use of telephone etc.
- *Social skills for work* – self-confidence, turning up on time, behaving appropriately etc.
- *Challenges* – barriers to employment / training, health issues, loss of benefits etc.
- *Enter into further learning*
- *Other soft skills* - making friends, working as part of a team, travel independently etc.
- *Gain qualifications*
- *Other* – anything not covered by the above

As show by the graph overleaf the main benefits identified (by category) were in 'stability' and 'social skills'. The category identified least was entering further education.

²⁰ It should be noted that the responses of interviewees were coded based on the categories identified within the Work Star in order to allow the findings of the telephone interviews to be compared with the findings of the analysis of Work Star data which is being collected by COASTAL but currently unavailable for analysis by the evaluation due to technical issues and concerns about data protection issues.

Figure 6.3: Main benefits identified by participants (categorised and weighted as a %)



N=263

For a more detailed analysis of the benefits identified within the above categories see Appendix 4.

6.5 Gaps in support as identified by participants

Twenty per cent of those interviewed (49/246) identified support that they perceived they needed but which (to the best of their knowledge) was not available via COASTAL. The things that participants identified as being unavailable varied considerably and included a number of very general comments such as:

- More activities
- More courses
- More support to develop confidence
- More encouragement

The most frequently identified gaps were 'follow-up sessions' (noted by seven respondents) and 'voluntary work' (noted by eight respondents) were areas of support that they felt were not available through their COASTAL project. The small number of responses does, however need to be taken into account when considering this finding.

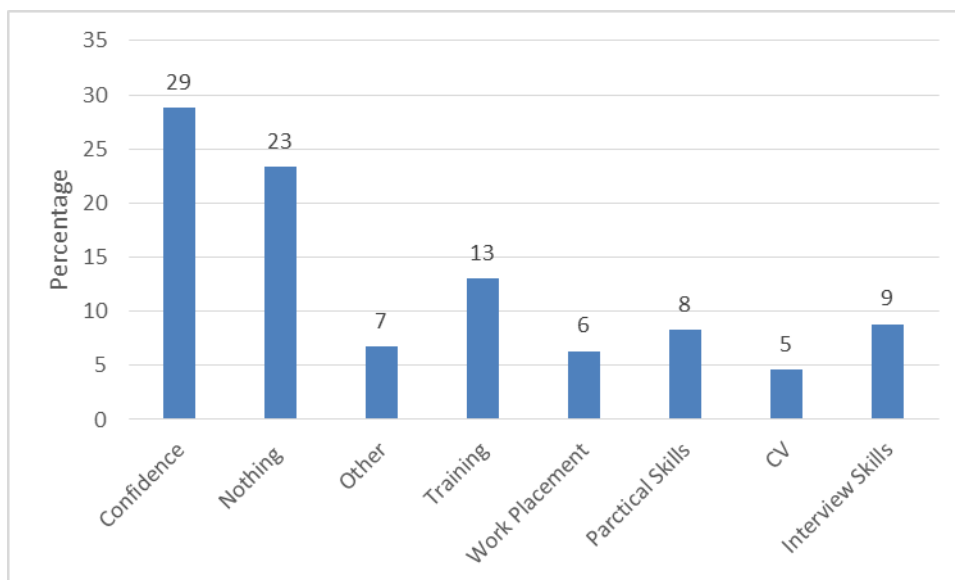
A review of comments made suggest that some participants are (or perceive that they are) experiencing a large time gap between being assessed and then finding either voluntary work or work experience. Most of the negative comments centred around being enthused with the idea of obtaining voluntary work or work experience, but then not having made progress.

- *“I just need help to get a placement and improve my maths and English, they said they'd help me with these but I haven't heard from them in months.”*
- *“Reading and writing and a work placement, these are things they said they'd do but haven't - six months later.”*
- *“Just to be supported, I feel I've been passed from pillar to post and there has been a lack of communication and no clear process to get me into just a volunteering position.”*

6.6 The main thing learnt which will help participants to get a job

The main benefit that the participants identified when asked to highlight the main thing they learnt which would help them get a job was confidence (29%); this allows them to build soft skills ready to then focus on finding work using the job search and employment training provided.

Figure 6.4: Response to the question: Of all the support you have received from COASTAL, what do you think will be the main thing you learnt which will help you get a job?



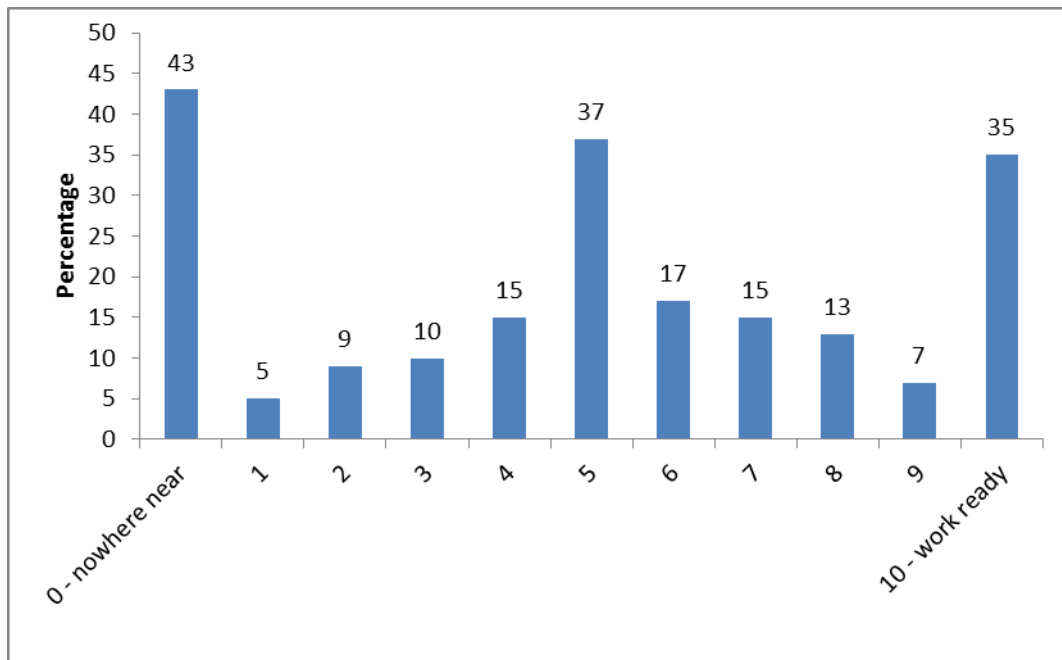
N = 231

It is interesting to note that almost one in four respondents said that they did not believe that any element of the support that they had received would help them move into employment. As illustrated by the comments overleaf, two themes are apparent within the comments made by this group of participants. Firstly, a group of the respondents do not perceive that they are in a position to work at the current time or, in some cases, at any point in the future. As such, none of the support that they have received has (from their perspective) improved their prospects of getting a job. The second (less frequent) theme is that some participants do not identify any benefits from employment.

6.7 Perceived distance from the labour market

In understanding participant's perceptions of how ready they are for work, we asked those who were still unemployed (86%, $n = 185$) how ready they were to take on work. Participants scored their perceptions of readiness along a scale from 0, nowhere near ready, to 10, work ready.

Figure 6.5: On a scale of 0 to 10 – how ready are you to work?



N = 185

Analysis suggests that participant's perceptions are clustered around very positive, very negative or responses that fall in-between. The tendency towards bi-modularity in responses suggests that people have strong views concerning how ready they are for work. Understanding the implications of these perceptions for COASTAL provision is complex and wide-ranging.

Further qualitative analysis of the cluster of responses around work ready suggest that on the whole, they found COASTAL provision helpful and supportive:

- *'Good project and the staff are lovely and helpful.'*
- *'They're very nice people and spent the time to help me in any way they could'*

For those that responded that they felt nowhere near the labour market, many also stated that they were unable to work because of health reasons or other significant barriers. Many found the support on offer valuable, however felt they were still unable to work.

- *'COASTAL was excellent... the staff were very supportive and made you feel relaxed and they would help you with anything... I'm unable to work but if I was it would be the confidence building that was the main thing that would help me get a job.'*

This analysis reinforces the fact that COASTAL is working with a client group that have significant barriers to work, in which a significant proportion of participants themselves feel they cannot achieve sustainable employment outcomes. One important factor to consider, however, is that participant's perceptions may themselves also present a barrier to securing employment. The extent to which this is the case within participants accessing COASTAL provision is difficult to determine accurately. Broader research cites attitudes, such as those regarding the possibility of securing employment, as an important factor in achieving positive outcomes.²¹

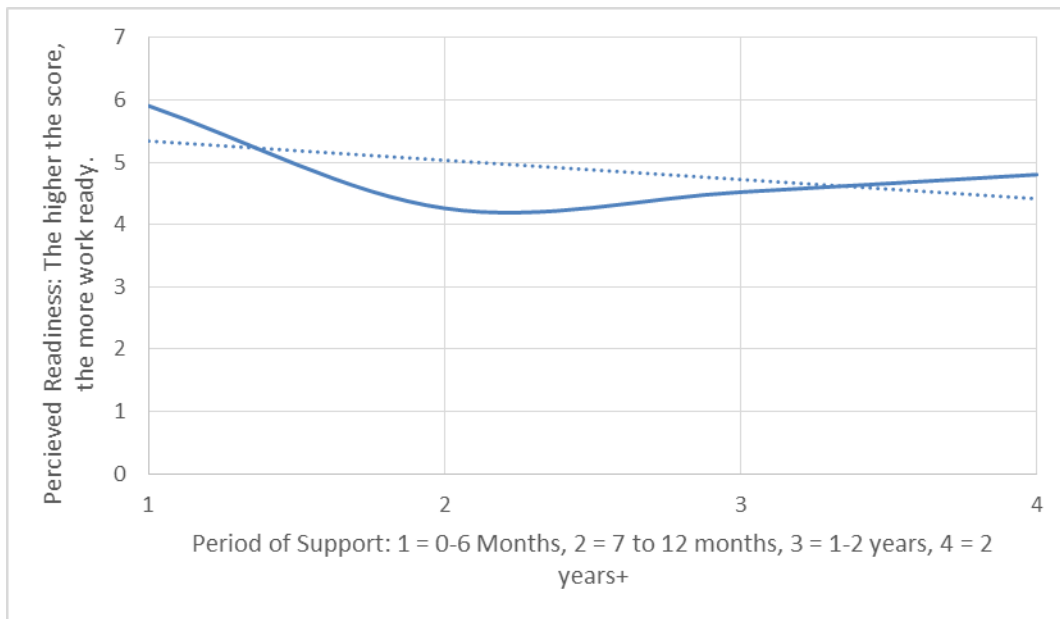
6.7.1 Perceived distance from work and period of support

The extent to which COASTAL provision has supported attitudinal and confidence change from not work ready to work ready would require additional longitudinal data. The following analysis explores the relationship between perceptions and period of support to see if there is a relationship between the two. Within the sample, a weak but significant negative correlation exists between perceived work readiness and duration of support ($r = -.151, p = .000$).

This suggests that as a group, on average, those that sought support for shorter periods reported that they were more confident in finding work than those that accessed COASTAL for longer periods. This relationship is not linear however, as those who were receiving support for 2+ years on average reported that they were more work ready than those after 1 year.

²¹ Liu S, Wang M and Huang J (2014) Effectiveness of Job Search Interventions: A Meta-Analytic Review in *Psychological Bulletin* 140: 4 pp 1009:1041

Figure 6.6: Average (Mean) work readiness against period of support



N = 217

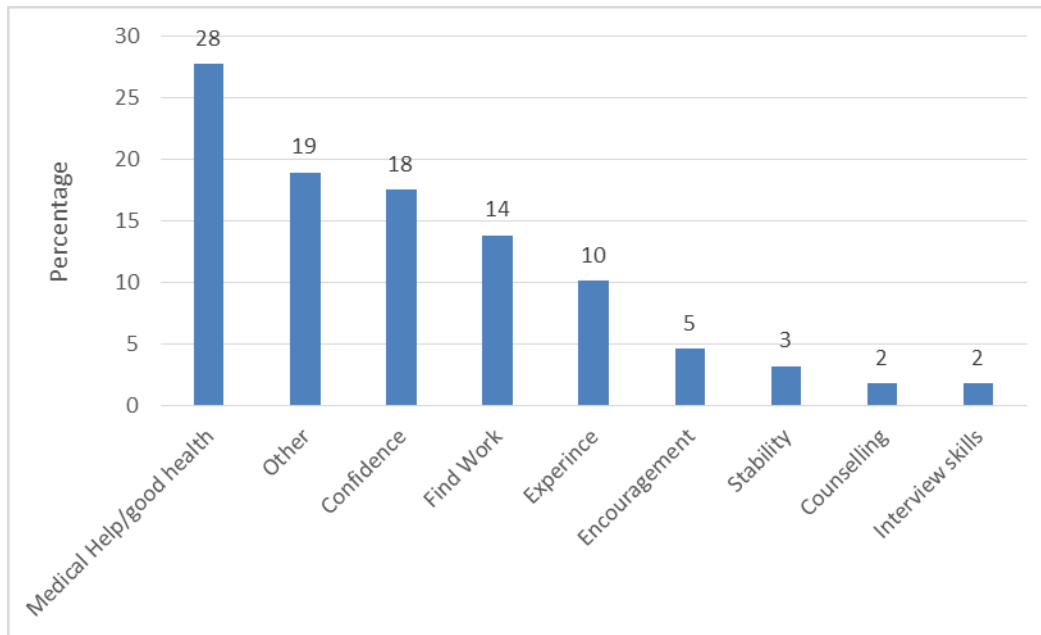
6.7.2 Perceived distance from work and employment outcomes

Does a participant's perceptions on work readiness impact on outcomes? Within the sample, a moderate and significant correlation exists between perceived work readiness and successful transitions into employment ($r = .315, p = .000$). This suggests that people's perceptions of themselves can play an important part of obtaining employment. This highlights the importance of the focus on improving confidence and employment related self-efficacy within employment programmes.

6.7.3 Addressing perceived distance from the labour market

Following the question of perceived distance from the labour market, participants were asked to describe what they thought they needed to do to get to a stage where they could secure employment.

Figure 6.7: Factors that participants think will support them into employment



N = 185, nb: Some respondents reported more than one factor.

The most common response to the question was overcoming health related barriers (28%, $n=60$). Significant factors also included improving confidence (18%, $n=38$) and finding work opportunities (14%, $n=30$). A large number of respondents stated factors that could not easily be categorised. These were coded for analysis as 'other'. Factors included a diverse range of barriers and beliefs:

- *'[Improved] transport, I've been offered so many jobs but transport is the main thing for me...'*
- *'I'd rather live in a country where they do better things with the tax money. Until the government changes then I won't want to work.'*

A small number of respondents were not clear on how to address the issue of finding work:

- *'I'm not sure, it's a bit difficult as [participant] has special needs...'* [father responding to questions on behalf of his son who has learning difficulties]

This analysis again supports the observation that COASTAL works with participants that have significant barriers to employment, or realistically may never achieve work without significant in-work support.

6.8 Ways in which participants were helped to get a job

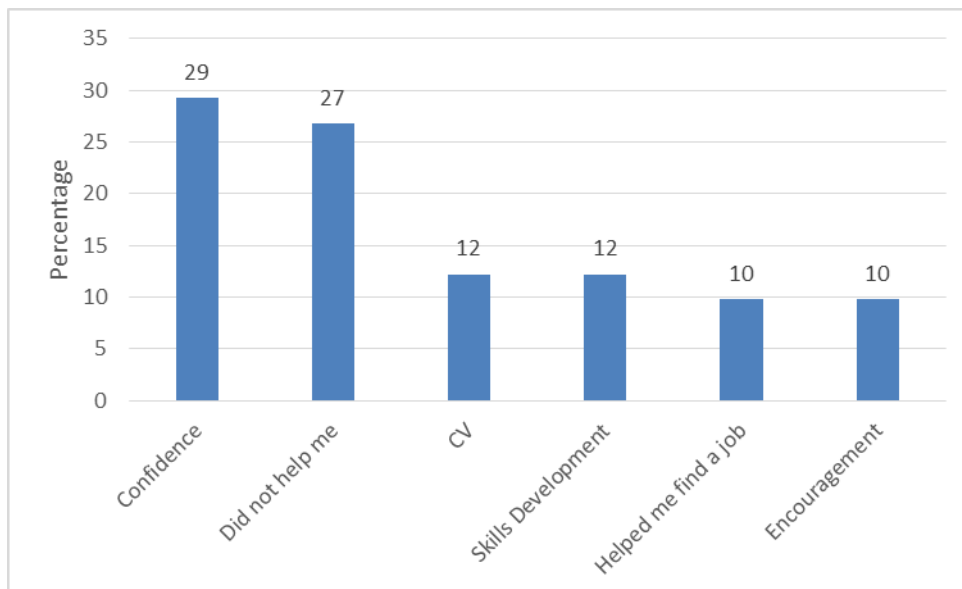
A total of 36 participants had secured employment at the time of the interview. This represents a total of 14% of the total sample ($n= 216$). Management Information from August 2014 suggests that a little over 10% of all COASTAL participants had secured employment, suggesting that the survey sample is roughly representative of the population as a whole. The sample is small, and findings should be interpreted with caution. To support this analysis, data from the 'high achievers' cohort that achieved positive outcomes ($n = 29$) has also been examined for potential trends. This data has been analysed concurrently to minimise bias, as the sample is not representative of the population as a whole.

6.8.1 Work readiness

Participants were asked how ready they felt they were to make the transition into employment. A significant proportion of respondents stated that they felt work ready (44%, $n = 16$). This suggests that perceptions and attitudes towards an individual's readiness for work is an important factor in securing employment. This is also reflected in High Achiever data with 38% ($n = 12$) reporting that they felt work ready.

Interview respondents were then asked a series of questions about how, if at all, COASTAL had helped them to get that job?

Figure 6.8: Ways in which COASTAL helped participants secure work?



N = 36

As illustrated, the factor that participants identified most often when asked to explain how COASTAL had supported them into employment, was that it had improved their confidence (29%, $n = 12$). This finding supports research which highlights self-efficacy as an important pre-requisite for successful transitions into employment. This highlights an important contribution of COASTAL provision in supporting people into employment, and should be considered a real strength. Isolating and promoting good practice that effectively supports improvements in confidence and self-efficacy could be an avenue for the future development of services.

A total of 11 respondents who had found employment (27%) stated that COASTAL provision had not contributed to securing employment outcomes. These responses represent the views of participants, and do not necessarily always accurately reflect the support they received. Some respondents provided inconsistent responses, stating that they had received training and that support was helpful, but still did not attribute the success to COASTAL. It does highlight the point that there may be a significant number of participants who may not explicitly recognise the support they have received. This may be explained by a number of factors, including perceptions of the quality of support they received, through to the clarity and purpose of provision in helping participants understand how COASTAL services could help them achieve their aims:

- *'[COASTAL was] a complete waste of time. The staff were always ill and they did not offer much support...'*

Other factors which participants stated as helping them into employment included CV writing, skills development, job search strategies and overall encouragement:

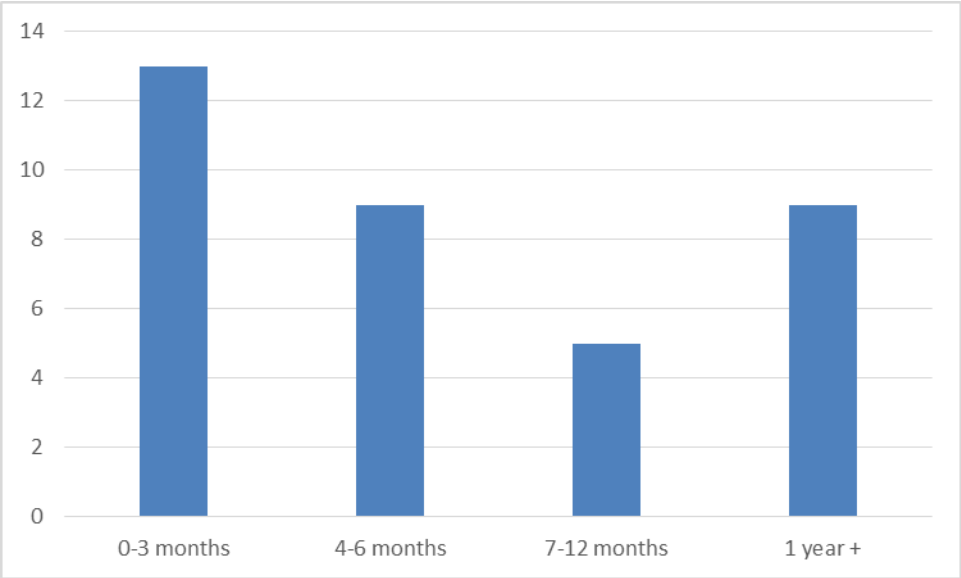
- *'[COASTAL helped me] by updating my CV and by giving me the confidence to get out there, saying I can actually do it if I put my mind to it...'*

These findings reflect the latest research which suggests that the most effective employment programmes seek to build confidence alongside practical job skills and overcoming barriers.

6.8.2 Type and length of employment

Participants, at the time of interview, had entered a range of jobs and had been in employment for varying amounts of time. The vast majority of respondents had entered part-time employment, 72% ($n = 26$). The rest had entered full-time employment ($n = 10$).

Figure 6.9: Length of employment

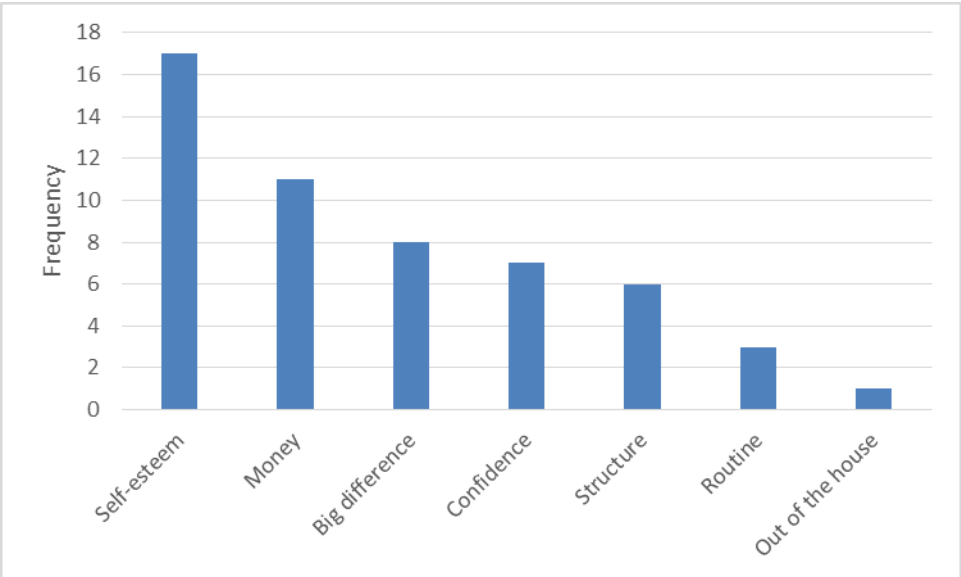


N = 36

6.8.3 Benefits of employment

Respondents that were able to secure employment outcomes were asked if they gained any benefits by making the transition. The most common responses were improvements to self-esteem and the financial rewards of being in employment. Others mentioned that it helped bring structure and routine to their lives.

Figure 6.10: The difference a job has made to participants: frequency



N = 53: NB Respondents could state a number of factors.

6.9 Would participants recommend the project to others?

Recommendation of any product or service to family and friends is a very strong indicator of satisfaction and 93% of those interviewed would indeed do so. When participants were asked to explain why, the most frequent answer was simply an appreciation of the impact the support provided was having or had on the individual in question.

6.10 Summing up: three words to describe the project

As a means of summing up their views on the project the interviewees were asked to note three words that they would use to describe COASTAL; 447 words were used to describe the programme, the most common of which were:

- Friendly (55)
- Helpful (50)
- Supportive (37)

A ‘word-cloud’ is a useful way of visualising this kind of data; the clouds give greater prominence to words that appear more frequently in the source text. The cloud below illustrates the words that participants used to describe COASTAL²².

Figure 6.11: Word-cloud illustrating the words used by participants to describe COASTAL



²² The word-cloud was produced using Wordle: <http://www.wordle.net/>

7 Case studies: participants

This section of the report includes a number of case studies of individuals supported by different elements of the COASTAL project. It is intended to provide 'real' examples of how participants have benefited from the support provided to them. In the majority of instances, the case studies are based on interviews undertaken by the evaluation team with 'high achieving' participants identified by project staff. Where it was not possible for the evaluation team to interview the participants directly, the case studies have been provided by the COASTAL team. The names of the individuals in question have been changed in order to protect their anonymity.

Key points

- The case studies illustrate the range of different types of individuals support by COASTAL as well as the range of support provided.
- They also illustrate the substantial impact of the support provided on some participants.

7.1 Bridgend

Ricky

At the time of interview Ricky was 24 and had been supported by COASTAL for about three years. He got involved in COASTAL because he was finding it hard to find employment and lacked self-confidence.

"I was struggling to find employment as I have a lack of confidence in myself. ... I asked for the support and they could see how much I wanted to get a job. They helped me with looking for work, I picked up interview skills and they helped me write my CV."

COASTAL also organised courses for Ricky to attend, including a first aid course, a forklift course and a manual handling course. He was also able to do his NVQ Level 1 in Customer Service.

"I gained a lot of confidence and experience. It gave me the chance to meet new people and make new friends. I did work placements with Scats Country Stores, did window cleaning around McArthur Glenn both for around six months each time."

Ricky felt that COASTAL had a more personal approach compared to other employment programmes he had been involved with and found the COASTAL team easier to talk to.

At the time of interview Ricky was unemployed and felt he was very nearly work ready, explaining; *"I need to get to the interview stage, I'm getting no response or feedback from employers where I've applied for employment."*

Ricky believes that a job would make a very big difference to his life, *“It would enable me to meet new people and get out of the house.”*

Ricky believes he would recommend the COASTAL project to other people in a similar position, explaining *“the project will organise courses that you're interested in doing and also sort out work placements. It's helped me to meet new people and make new friends.”*

7.2 Carmarthenshire

Peter

Peter was 39 when the researcher spoke to him about his experience with the COASTAL project. Peter was referred to Carmarthenshire COASTAL through the Job Centre, eighteen months prior to interview through the Job Centre; he had not worked since 2003 following three accidents in work.

He explains the kind of support he received through COASTAL;

“I had a lot of support; they've bought someone to the house because I wasn't going out who saw I had a talent for doing things. I certainly wouldn't be talking to you on the phone if it weren't for COASTAL, I had no confidence, they spent a lot of time encouraging me to go out of the house. There was a lot of one-to-one and she encouraged me to go to Colts Hill where I was helped to be around people and the lady who ran the centre spent a lot of time helping me, if it wasn't for COASTAL I wouldn't have gone there.”

Peter explains the main benefit he received from the project was the training courses and the one-to-one support;

“They [COASTAL] put me on a training programme; I did a course which taught me how to teach wood turning to people with learning difficulties. I did a few other courses as well peer mentoring and a health and safety course. I can't sit down, I can only lie down and COASTAL spoke to the lady in the centre and arranged a bed for me so I could lay down whenever I needed to. They set up a thing with Next Steps so I could teach wood turning there and I started off as a volunteer and then I did two months volunteering and nearly three months paid doing four hours a day and I didn't need to be on my feet all the time. My advisor spent a lot of time with me one-to-one and helped me to get out of the house, increasing it gradually, reassuring me and things like that.”

The COASTAL project has also improved Peter's confidence; *“My confidence has improved, before I wouldn't go out of the house or talk to people on the phone.”*

Peter plans to go to university, and then once his course has been completed he will look for work.

Sally

Sally had been out of work for eight years when she was referred to COASTAL. At the time of interview she was 58 had had been involved with Carmarthenshire COASTAL for about two years.

It was the Job Centre who first put Sally in touch with the COASTAL programme, who put her on a flower arranging course. COASTAL also enabled Sally to do a half-day computer course and helped her to write her CV. She wanted experience in a different line of work, she didn't know what she wanted to do but thought COASTAL could offer her advice on what she was able to do with her back problems.

Sally describes the main benefits she received from COASTAL;

"I did a year course on floral design and passed it, unfortunately I couldn't go back on to the second course because my back worsened and financially I couldn't afford the equipment, although COASTAL funded the course. I gained extra skills on the computer because I did a half day course. COASTAL also helped me with writing up my CV."

When asked whether there was any support that COASTAL did not offer, Sally explains; *"I wanted more financial support so expenses for equipment and travelling expenses were paid for."*

Sally states that the best thing about the support provided was that *"I learnt that doing something different and gaining new skills will help. By finding out what opportunities there are for courses I've got a bigger chance of gaining new skills."*

Although Sally's back has deteriorated, and she feels that employment is still a way off, she believes that a job *"would mean I'd be able to get out of the house and socialise. I'm feeling quite isolated at the moment."*

7.3 Ceredigion

James

Wavehill spoke to James in 2014 to hear about his involvement with the COASTAL project. At the time of interview, James was 34 and had been involved in COASTAL for six months.

“I originally studied in art college and have a degree. ... I was finding it hard to fund my passion in art myself. I was setting up sculptures at festivals and doing building work but my back kept giving me pain as I've slipped a disk, I was signed off for nine months so I had to stop doing physical work and I wanted to get back into art.”

COASTAL were able to provide a course for James which helped him in his business; *“I was able to do an additional course in health and safety which enables me to work more efficiently and safely... the main benefits were that I managed to pursue my business idea. It's enabled me to work and be self-employed and support other people as well, I run workshops for adults with learning difficulties and children too.”*

James believes he was well supported by COASTAL explaining; *“[COASTAL] went above and beyond, doing everything they could to help me to set-up my business. They not only funded my equipment but also gave me great advice and guidance.”*

James feels that from his involvement in the project he is much happier and has a lot more confidence. At the time of interview, James was in full-time, permanent employment. He is confident about his future employment prospects, explaining *“I'm self-employed and everything is going really well.”*

James summarised his experience with the project as;

“[It is] really great that they [COASTAL] saw my idea and helped me in any way they could to get me set-up by myself. I've got nothing but good things to say about them.”

Kellie

Having worked in high street retail for 15 years, Kellie at the age of 50 decided on a change in career following a hip replacement. She went along to the Job Centre to find out about a computer course which would enable her to become a receptionist, and they signposted her to the COASTAL project. She had been supported by Ceredigion COASTAL 12 months when we spoke to her about her experiences.

COASTAL organised a computer course and work experience for Kellie to help her to get back into work and she felt that *'they wanted me to go back to work; they don't want anyone not working.'*

"I did a Level 1 and 2 computer course, they organised work experience at the council and after seven weeks the council took me on for paid employment."

Alongside the computer course, the project helped Kellie to sort out her CV and gave her tips on her interview skills. In addition Kellie feels she *"received a lot of moral support... I owe them everything."*

Kellie cites the best thing about COASTAL as *"they believed in me which gave me the confidence to believe in myself, I know that I can work."*

At the time of interview, Kellie had been in full-time, permanent employment at the council for 15 months. She believes that COASTAL helped her to get the job through, not only preparing her to be work ready, but by *"introducing me to the line manager and referring me there for experience, being able to show them what I can do and show that I was more than capable to do what I wanted to do"*.

Kellie feels better equipped to work at the council, explaining;

"Before I could only work part-time due to my disability, once I got into the job I didn't think I'd be able to do it but it suits what I want and need, so I'm generally so much happier."

Kellie would recommend the COASTAL project to her family and friends, explaining that *"if you want to get on in life, join COASTAL. They've changed my life, I go to work and come home with a smile on my face and it's all down to them."*

7.4 Pembrokeshire

Debbie

Debbie is 50 years old and had been supported by Pembrokeshire COASTAL project for 12 months when we spoke to her about her story.

“I was working and lost my job because I had a nervous breakdown, so I was unemployed, I was very, very unwell, suicidal and severely depressed.”

Debbie had heard about the COASTAL project through friends and was introduced to a development worker who, together with Debbie designed a bespoke programme of support to try and help her get her life back on track;

“My problem was that my communication skills were affected by my condition, I needed to go back to midwifery and in the state I was in I couldn't be with people when I had no confidence in myself, I needed to do a Return to Practice course too and I didn't feel I would be able to do it. Literally after a couple of meetings with her support worker things changed dramatically because he listened to me, I didn't feel judged and he was wonderful.”

Besides feeling depressed and suicidal Debbie was also originally from outside of the UK and felt that she did not have many friends in the country that she felt could support her. When asked what her expectations were when she first started working with COASTAL Debbie replied;

“I was hoping just for feedback that the support worker would help me to assess myself from an objective point of view, whether I was crazy or not crazy because I was very concerned. He [support worker] gave me total reassurance that I'm alright and also I was hoping he would guide me, give me some tools how to communicate with people and help me in my weak points.”

COASTAL supported Debbie with both emotional and practical things, from writing a letter to helping her to analyse her situation and how she was feeling;

“Because of my situation, I mean the difficulties I had trying to do the Return to Practice course and in communication with midwives and managers, I was struggling and my support worker from COASTAL was very, very quick at coming back and analysing and giving different perspectives on the situation which was invaluable.”

Whilst undertaking the Return to Practise course Debbie was also able to receive financial support from COASTAL; *“On three occasions they supported me financially, without it I don't know how I would have managed.”*

When asked what main benefits Debbie had received from having support though COASTAL she replied;

“When I was ill, I didn't brush my teeth, I was ugly, I was like a tramp, my house was a mess, I didn't have the will to do anything in my garden or anything. From the day I went to COASTAL and came back home I started to do my garden and gradually I became a human being and my daughter is not embarrassed about me anymore. I have the will to live, I am working now, I am a midwife and I am helping so many people now. They supported me through my Return to Practice course so I could return to midwifery. It absolutely improved my self-confidence and self-worth and made me start believing in myself again.”

Debbie has now been employed for 12 months and summed up her experience with COASTAL by saying;

“It saved my life, it's not just me it's my daughter too, it affected my daughter tremendously, she's 26 and we are just so happy, we started a new life after I had support from COASTAL. My experience with COASTAL will be with me forever and the project is so good and I want to thank them so much. I am not embarrassed anymore, I am not ashamed, I'm not scared anymore, I can do anything I want, it is just amazing and I am just so grateful.”

Andrew

We spoke to Andrew in 2013. At the time of interview he was 32 years old and had been involved with Pembrokeshire COASTAL for about five years. Andrew explains;

“I suffered from depression for a long period of time and five years ago I had a fairly serious suicide attempt which left me with a broken back and broken legs... I came back home to live with my mum and dad to recover and COASTAL helped me start to rebuild towards work.”

Andrew was referred to COASTAL by a family friend who was familiar with the project;

“Basically I was at a stage where my life was starting again, it was a case of rebuilding and that brought its own challenges. I wanted to get back to work but I wasn't ready for work, no matter how much I thought I was and it was about getting that flexible support so I could have good days and bad days in a way that didn't count against me, that in employment wouldn't have been possible, it helped me to rebuild towards full-time employment. ... I think probably at that stage I was still pretty confused, I just knew I needed help to try and start building towards something positive, I don't think I knew at that stage how far I would get or what I would get.”

He described the benefit of the support he received as follows:

“I think it was the opportunity to... basically I was at a stage where I wouldn't have been able to find and approach organisations myself, I just wouldn't have had the confidence or the capability of doing that, having someone back you and support you made a big difference and then also finding the right placement, for that placement to be flexible and adapt around me. Basically it's helped me find new skills really.”

Stability is one area that Andrew feels that COASTAL has developed in his life, explaining; *“When I joined COASTAL I was really living day by day, now things are much, much more stable, I've got a girlfriend and am looking to move out of my parents' home, things are going well and I'm working full-time.”*

At the time of interview Andrew was employed, full-time;

“...they [COASTAL] set me up with a placement with [organisation name] which led to me being able to develop my skills.”

Although his current employment is temporary, Andrew feels that he will look for similar work and look to gain more relevant qualifications. He feels that having a job has had a huge impact on his life, allowing him to run a car and be independent.

Andrew says that he would recommend the COASTAL project to other people in a similar position, explaining;

“Absolutely ... it was something that was perfect for me at the time. I really don't think I would be where I am today without the project and the structure that it has; the ability to have that support in terms of finding the right placement and basically taking the difficulty out of it so you can have the opportunity without the intimidating part of it.”

7.5 Neath Port Talbot

The following case studies were provided by the COASTAL team and are written from the perspective of the participant.

Aaron

“After having a few illnesses which prevented me from working for three years I found myself looking to get back into work but I was at a junction in my life where I didn’t know what to do and needed the right support to get myself back in the work place.

My partner was already part of the COASTAL Project, so we asked if I would be able to join as they had already helped her find some training. I filled out a referral form and was contacted by a member of the COASTAL Team within a week, this was happening very fast but I knew I was making the right steps forward.”

A member of a Coastal Team came to my house to meet me, I was quite nervous because I had been living in my own world for three years and I didn’t know what to expect. My new Employment Liaison Officer sat down with me after making a cuppa and we talked about everything, my illnesses, my previous jobs, what I would like to do in the future, hobbies and Welsh cakes! My Employment Liaison Officer and I came to the conclusion my main passion was food so we decided to look into catering as an employment path to follow.

Within a few weeks I was on my Food Hygiene Level 2 Course, I completed the course and obtained my certificate. I was really pleased that I was making fast steps forward into the right direction. Unfortunately shortly after, I became unwell again. I contacted my Employment Liaison Officer to let him know I was unwell again and had to have some treatment and he was great. He gave me time to have my treatment and kept in contact all the time when I was recovering, which was great to have support as I knew he understood my situation. As soon as I recovered he was back on the trail of finding me the perfect job. My Employment Liaison Officer set up a working interview for me in a local hotel, I did my first 10hour shift and it felt good to get some recent work experience under my belt.

Although I was pleased for my work interview I did not feel it was the right working environment for me, and felt I wanted to make a difference in a role and help others. We opened up our search and looked for catering within care settings. I applied for several posts with support from COASTAL and gained my first job interview in 10 years! I was a bag of nerves but I had support to help me prepare for my interview. I got the job, in fact I ended up getting two jobs after attending another interview for a different post! Although I was excited and proud of myself I still didn’t feel comfortable in what I had chosen, COASTAL were great and supported me to find the best employment for me.

After several weeks of feeling confused about what to do with my career path my Employment Liaison Officer gave me a call. I will always remember the phone call, they had found a position for me that was beyond perfect! It was working within the COASTAL Project training vulnerable adults catering skills within a kitchen environment, I couldn’t believe my luck!

I loved the role and since accepting it I have changed departments several times and dedicated myself to projects needs as well as the clients.

My most recent venture through COASTAL is managing the catering facilities based at the new Swansea University campus. I have a small team that I manage and I respect my staff just as much as they respect me. I never thought I would be here today running an establishment and completing all my own finances and ordering but I am!

We are busy all day every day but together we enjoy work and help each other through difficult times.

I feel so pleased that I found the COASTAL Project and I appreciate all the support and faith the team have had in me from day one. I am now part of their team and those people that helped me through some of the harder times of my life are now my colleagues and more importantly my friends. The best thing is they still support me now but I can now support them too!"

Joanna

My name is Joanna; I am classed as a disabled person and I have found that getting a job with my difficulties has been very hard. I spent a long time out of work and lost a lot of confidence along the way. I was referred to the COASTAL Project by my advisor at Want to Work and they sent a job coach to see me.

My COASTAL advisor put me at ease right away telling me that he and the team at COASTAL will support me all the way through training into employment.

Through my time with COASTAL I found that they looked after the things that I needed; the COASTAL team are all so friendly and after a few sessions with my advisor I was actually given the opportunity to apply for a cleaning position at COASTAL. I was interviewed and offered a position the next day, this made me happy beyond belief.

I was nervous as I have been out of work for a long time but the team said they would be with me every step of the way, providing me with training and support. I felt sorry for my advisor who had to get up at 6:00am every morning to train me into the post but I found that I slipped into the routine very quickly and no longer need the support as much.

The staff at COASTAL have always been so welcoming towards me and offered any sort of support that I required. I gained qualifications since joining the Project these included lone working and first aid. The future for me is clear and bright, I am working, I enjoy working and I will continue to work. I have gained enough confidence and experience now to see that I have so much to offer.

I have since left the COASTAL Project and gained two new job roles within the community! I feel confident in the workplace and I enjoy having a routine to follow every day. I am looking forward to the future as I have already had an offer to gain more hours at one of my posts after Christmas. This fills me with pride as I know that they value me as a person and my work ethic enough to extend my hours. I am looking forward to the Christmas parties I have been invited to with other staff members, I now enjoy socialising with others and feel comfortable doing so.

With the support of the team at COASTAL I have found that despite my disability I can work, undertake training and socialise with staff comfortably.

Thanks to my husband Andrew, my own determination and the COASTAL team for helping me understand that I am a real asset; I am a friendly, hardworking, punctual, outstanding member of the team. I now know that those qualities are the ones that local employers are looking for."

7.6 Swansea

David

David, at the age of 12, was diagnosed with ME. He had little education, and started receiving support in 2010 from Swansea COASTAL, at the time of interview David was 25. He admits that he was reluctant to get involved with the project to begin with, but knows that he needed the support.

David feels the COASTAL project has had a big impact on his life, explaining;

"It's really helped my confidence and my general well-being, I feel more capable and motivated and I have more ambition."

In addition, COASTAL have organised several courses, including graphic and web design courses, and courses on health and safety and food and hygiene. David states that *"I've also received support with CV writing, interview skills and searching and applying for jobs."*

From the support he received through COASTAL, David feels he was better prepared for employment and is now employed on a temporary contract, part-time;

"I started a position in COASTAL late July last year as a volunteer so I now mentor other participants of the programme... I'm more or less running a project that was developed through the former COASTAL project, I've mentored trainees in graphic design and printing."

David feels that having a job has had a big impact on his life *"I'm financially more stable. It helps get me up in the morning."*

Ian

Ian had a traumatic brain injury seven years ago and had been out of work since then. He got involved with COASTAL about three years ago, when he was 30. As part of his recovery, Ian was assigned an occupational therapist who signposted him to COASTAL.

Ian explains that at the time of referral *"I needed some sort of support in general with changing my life. ... I wanted to change and find something to do that I was interested in."*

Ian sites many benefits from COASTAL including improved confidence, learning of skills and the mentoring provided.

"The biggest benefit was being able to change my life and improve my confidence. I was able to get my driving licence funded. I received general help with improving my life, updating my CV and job searching and I was able to gain a qualification doing a European Computer Driving Licence (ECDL) course. I was involved with a small print business at Swansea Vale where I had a mentor to help me with small printing tasks and activities. I am now a mentor for the same company, mentoring others in the business with similar issues in their lives as to what I had."

At the time of interview Ian had been employed for roughly two years in a part-time temporary position. He believes that COASTAL played a large role in helping him to get the job.

"I was mentored in Swansea Vale at a small print business; I was learning how to put small prints on canvases, banners and posters. I am now a mentor to other people. I mentored a guy with similar issues to what I had. I think it helps to not just have the experience with printing but also to have been through the same sort of thing so I have empathy and understanding of what they're going or have been through."

Ian believes that having a job has made a big difference to his life, explaining;

"It's excellent; it's made a massive difference. Throughout life, I've always liked to keep busy, keeps me out the house. I'm really interested in what I'm doing so it's like my perfect job."

7.7 HMP Swansea, Chaplaincy project

The following case study was provided by the Chaplaincy project team as it was not possible for the evaluation team to interview participants in this element of COASTAL.

Robbie

I went to visit Robbie on 'C' Wing and found him to be extremely anxious about his release day. It was the first time in years that his circumstances have changed as he had experienced the first contact with his daughter in over thirty-three years. Understandably, Robbie was emotional at the prospect of forging a relationship with his daughter, but very happy too.

Initially no-one was prepared for these events, as it was felt not enough support would be able to be put in place for Robbie. Steve had visited Robbie to explain his possible options in respect of accommodation. 1) Housing Options. 2) Gorwellion. 3) Cae-Las. The first option would involve staying in a B&B in Swansea, whereas the other two would involve supported accommodation which was felt to be preferable. Another option could be Plasmarl House but initial feedback suggested that Robbie had 'burnt his bridges' as he had failed to stay there on three previous occasions.

Both Community Chaplaincy and the Offender Management Unit had been in contact with Gorwellion and Cae-Las and there was a possibility that Gorwellion would have a vacancy on the day of Robbie's release. However this did not happen and we had to face the worst case scenario of Robbie staying at a B&B. I phoned Nicola at Neath Housing Options and explained the situation together with our concerns for Robbie of repeating his previous behaviour. There were also difficulties in travelling to Neath due to Robbie's ASBO conditions but we were able to work out an appropriate route.

On his release, Steve met Robbie on the gate and took him to Zac's. I met him there and took him to the doctor's and spent a lot of time sorting out Robbie's medication, Steve later took Robbie to the Arches B&B. The weekend was feared to be a real test as Robbie tended to drink to excess on his many previous releases. Unknown to me, Nicola had called the Arches to explain the situation and they helped to ensure Robbie did not spend time around the bar and also allowed Robbie's daughter to visit him and bring food into the dining area as they spent time together.

After the weekend, I took him to WCADA (Welsh Centre for Action on Dependency & Addiction) for his appointment and we were able to arrange for Robbie to have regular future appointments. Robbie told me how much he was struggling at the B&B and he feared he would not be able to cope for much longer. I decided to visit Plasmarl House and asked Robbie to initially stay in the car. I went and chatted with the manager, Pat Bushell, and explained Robbie's new circumstances. Pat was willing to chat with Robbie and after an informal chat, Robbie was invited to move in that day if he so wished. Robbie agreed and I helped Robbie move his belongings into Plasmarl House and thanked everyone who had made it possible.

We all felt this was a huge move forward in helping Robbie with his desire to move forward with his life and with his desire to build a relationship with his daughter, she was relieved with his new accommodation. Over the following weeks, Robbie had regular visits from myself, Steve and his daughter. All seemed to be going well until Robbie became increasingly agitated at staying at Plasmarl House. He was struggling with not drinking and despite our best efforts, Robbie decided to leave Plasmarl House and began drinking again. This resulted in his arrest and a return to HMP Swansea.

This time Robbie seems different in custody and is eager for his release. Paul Jagger, Governor of Safer Custody, his staff together with Community Chaplaincy are working to support and restore relations with both Plasmarl House and his daughter. Our efforts will continue as this is a man who has serious health concerns and has been in and out of HMP Swansea regularly for nearly thirty years.

7.8 PRISM

The following case studies were provided by the PRISM team.

Feedback from a participant

"I was referred to COASTAL in October 2010 by my alcohol worker. At that time I was even scared to go out of the house, let alone engaging in any activity. In December I was introduced to peer mentoring which appealed to me straight away and I have been involved in their activities ever since.

Taking part in peer mentoring helped me realise that there were other people in the same situation as me who were trying their best to overcome their difficulties, which encouraged me to do the same and stop feeling sorry for myself. It also helped a lot with my self-esteem.

At the moment I am taking part in training to become a peer mentor myself, which hopefully will enable me to help others who are struggling with finding direction and motivation in their life. I have also been introduced to several other activities, which I was free to choose the ones that suited me.

During this period I was also helped to gain funding to take part in the Open University Introduction to Psychology course, which was a major boost to my confidence because that was one of the main goals I had (to study).

After completing the OU course I was then guided towards applying for further study with Swansea University. Following an interview with the Curriculum and Programme Manager, I was accepted for the part-time degree in Humanities which was a big turning point in my life towards the positive. My hope is that I will eventually complete the degree and begin working in the field of psychology and counselling.

As a result of my involvement with COASTAL I have managed to turn my life from frustration towards hope and confident plans about the future. I am very grateful for the selfless devotion and commitment of the COASTAL workers who can make a big difference to people's lives and take no credit for it. I am the living proof that it is worth letting other people help you and COASTAL has done just that."

Participant A

Participant **A** is aged 57 and has just secured employment with Pam Lai a Swansea based homeless charity for young people. He was referred across to the COASTAL project from the 'Prism Ymlaen' project, where he accessed treatment for alcohol issues.

Following his enrolment with COASTAL he was encouraged to join the COASTAL Job Club. He was given help to update his CV, tips on interview skills and job search skills as well as the completion of application forms. We discussed **A**'s career aspirations so that he could tailor his job search. He had previously worked for Dyfed Powys Police as a Custody officer for over 25 years and felt that he'd like to work in the support work sector. In addition he was supported to go on various training courses funded by Carmarthenshire County Council Coast Team including: Confidence Building, Health & Safety at Work, Security Card and First Aid.

Participant **A** felt that at 57 he would never work again and having been out of work for some months, felt he was out of touch with job hunting, as so many jobs now require an on-line application, which is something that he was not familiar with. He said:

"Without the support of the COASTAL project I wouldn't be in a job now and I've been given lots of training to give me the skills I need to get back into employment, I could never have funded the training myself. I was supported on a one-to-one basis initially and then got involved in group sessions which I found very rewarding, I feel as though I've got my life back on track again."

8 Case studies: the provision of support

The purpose of this section is to provide examples of how COASTAL support has been provided across the region. The case studies presented are not intended as examples of 'best practice' from within the project. Rather, they are included as an illustration of the activity and support provided.

Key points

A wide range of support has been provided via the COASTAL project including:

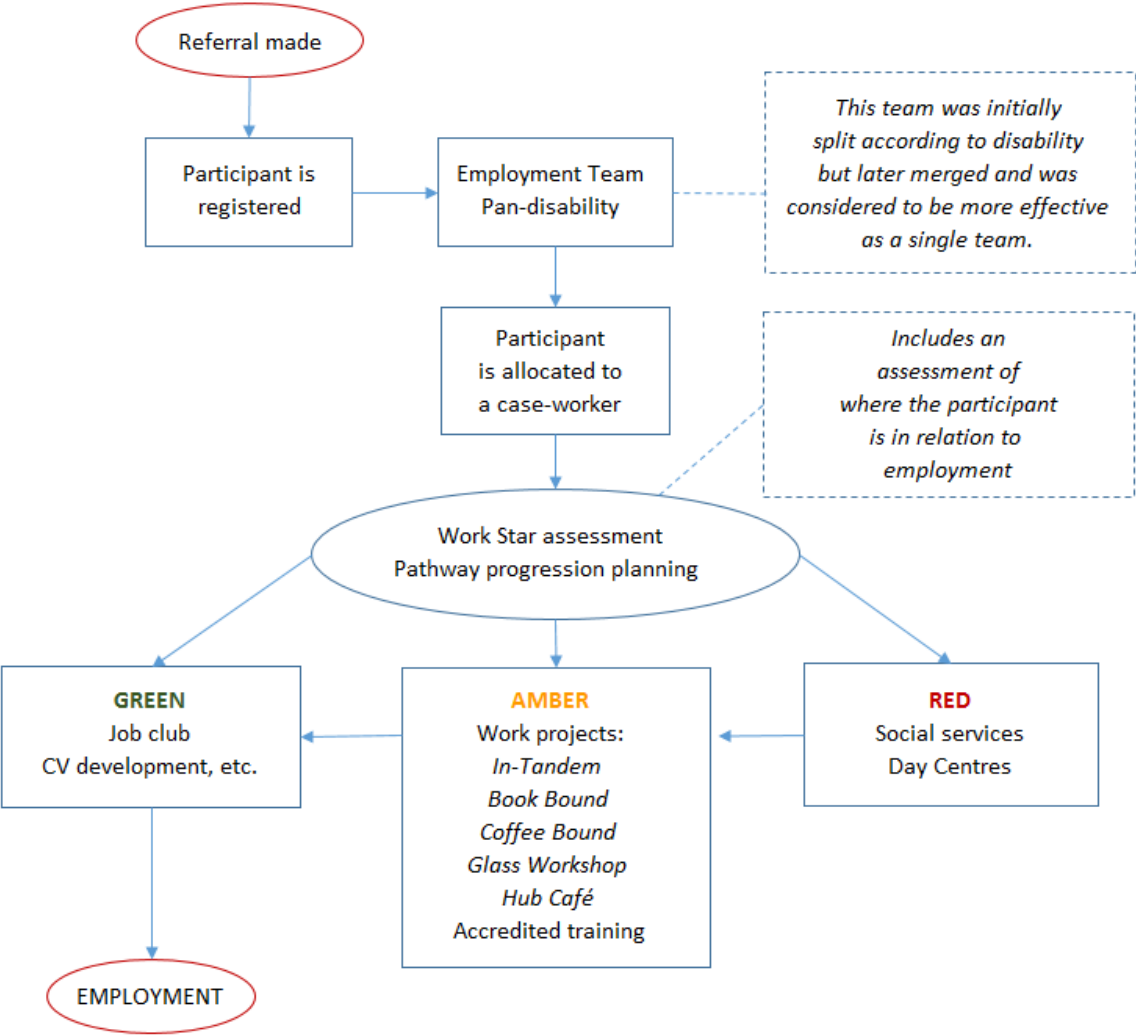
- Support targeted specifically at a group of participants - care leavers
- Job clubs in support of those actively looking for work
- A range of projects / activities designed to offer work experience opportunities (essentially intermediary labour market activities)
- Activities designed to encourage engagement and social networking

8.1 Assessment of need – traffic light method, Neath Port Talbot

The following graphic is an outline of the 'COASTAL process' as it existed in Neath Port Talbot and is included here in order to provide an example of the process from start to finish illustrating how a participant can progress from one stage to another.

When explaining the process to the researcher, the project manager for Neath Port Talbot highlighted the centralised assessment process as being a key part of the process along with the design of a plan centred on the needs of the individual rather than the services that could be provided.

Figure 8.1: Summary of the COASTAL process in Neath Port Talbot



8.2 Shadowing a COASTAL Pathway Advisor, Ceredigion

The researcher met with the Pathway Advisor at the COASTAL offices in Aberaeron on Friday 26th October 2012 at 9:00am. He said that he and his colleagues see 90-95% of participants in their homes as that is easier than them coming to the office due to the rurality of the county and transport. He has 68 participants on his case load and goes out to do the initial enrolment, Work Star, action plan, declaration letter and risk assessment before it is passed over to a support worker. The researcher spent the day with the Pathway Advisor as he met with COASTAL participants in various locations and made the following notes and observations.

Canolfan Steffan – Lampeter Day Centre – annual review

Male participant with learning disabilities, 42 years old.

The Pathway Advisor attended an annual review with a participant with learning disabilities; present at the meeting were the participant, an Assessor Care Manager/Social Worker based in the Community Team for Learning Disabilities in Aberaeron Social Services, the Manager of the day centre and the participants key worker facilitated the meeting.

There were sheets of paper that had been put on the wall with different headings; Sign in (those present at the meeting), Like/Admire, What's Working, Not working, Improvements to Now, Improvements for the Future and Action Plan. It is a person centred approach and the idea is to take the time to gather information to get a full picture of what's happening to the participant and to put together an action plan. Everyone including the participant put comments on the sheets and it was really interesting to see the level of detail covered including his friendships – negative and positive, housing, volunteering, his safety - everything. One of the issues discussed was the participants work placement with COASTAL, he works at the tennis courts in Aberystwyth doing maintenance work one day a week and this was seen as very positive for him and he enjoys doing it. Due to the vulnerability of the participant it was noted on the action plan that The Pathway Advisor and Wendy (COASTAL support worker) would keep Jackie (social worker) informed of his progress ensuring all involved with the participant were communicating effectively for his benefit and safety.

Enrolment visit at participants home, Llanarth

Male participant with learning disabilities, 22 years old.

The Pathway Advisor explained that this was the first visit with this participant after receiving a referral from Careers Wales. His mother sat with him during the visit and the Pathway Advisor explained to them about COASTAL, about the training available to help him get on the ladder to eventual employment and about the enrolment process. The participant said the family had moved to the area about five years ago, he hadn't got any qualifications from school and said he had trouble with his reading. He had done a catering and a performing arts course in Coleg Ceredigion which finished in July 2011, the only work he had done since was a couple of days in a fish and chip shop. He said he was interested in doing car mechanics and improving his maths and English.

The Pathway Advisor talked him through the Work Star explaining that it is a tool for gauging various aspects of skill, motivation and so on, that it shows COASTAL staff where people are at that time, strength/weaknesses, etc. and it helps them put together an action plan.

- Aspiration and Motivation – The Pathway Advisor said that the participant had expressed an interest in motor mechanics and that was something he had always been interested in. The participant said, *“I like art and doing things up, I’ve been looking at mechanics training but they’re all full-up.”* He scored himself a 6.
- Job Search Skills – *“I’ve got a CV and can use the internet and I’m good at making things too.”* The Pathway Advisor said that these are all skills he had that he didn’t mention, he read out the scoring and the participant put himself at a 6.
- Stability - The Pathway Advisor asked if there were any housing issues/financial issues, if he was settled living there. The participant said he wasn’t into drugs or *“too much”* alcohol and scored himself at a 7.
- Job Specific Skills – *“I worked briefly in the chip shop, I was serving customers, clearing tables, waiting on and working on the till and when I was in college I did work experience in Badlands, the shop that used to be in Aberystwyth.”* He scored himself at a 6.
- Basic Skills – *“I’m good on computers, I’m teaching my mum! I go on Facebook and talk to friends.”* The Pathway Advisor asked if he could do a CV on the computer and file it, when the participant said he couldn’t he asked if he’d be interested in learning and the participant said he would. The Pathway Advisor asked if he’d be interested in doing art on the computer and furthering his IT skills and said he was just trying to find out his abilities and interests. He again scored himself at a 6 and said *“I want to improve my skills but don’t know where to start.”*
- Social Skills for Work – The Pathway Advisor asked the participant to tell him a little about himself, how would he be working in a team, if he wanted to work inside or outside, what he was like mixing with people and getting up in the morning, getting to a job on time etc. The participant said, *“Alright, good and I can get up and am pretty good at making friends, I like mixing with people.”* He scored himself a 6.

- Challenges – *“I think I’m finding it hard to get into car mechanics as you need qualifications, you need maths, English and science and I haven’t got them.”* The Pathway Advisor asked him if he’d consider looking at voluntary work while they were looking for something for him to do. The participant answered, *“Yes, something to do with computers or car mechanics.”* The Pathway Advisor said he would have a chat with COASTAL’s training advisor to see what they could find and then said that transport was a bit of a challenge there as no-one in the family drives and he was reliant on the bus service. The participant replied, *“Yes, there’s one an hour and they don’t start until quarter to eight in the morning.”* He struggled reading the explanations for the scoring on this one and with help from the Pathway Advisor scored himself as a 7.

The Pathway Advisor explained that for the action plan they had already gone through a few things, he said the priority was to improve basic skills; literacy, maths and IT and said that COASTAL have forms where they can assess participants ability and that he would ask one of their support workers to come along next time so they could do that. He then completed an action plan highlighting the things that they had agreed to do;

- Seek to improve on basic skills; literacy, maths and IT
- Seek out a volunteering opportunity
- Get him a place on a health and safety course

The Pathway Advisor then went through a risk assessment form explaining that it was to ensure that COASTAL don’t put him at any risk. The whole enrolment process took nearly two hours. The Pathway Advisor said he tries to get the paperwork including the Work Star completed on the first visit, even though it’s lengthy because of the distance they need to travel to some participants.

We then returned to the COASTAL office in Aberaeron where the Pathway Advisor asked the support workers if they knew of anywhere that customised cars, putting the participant’s interest in mechanics and art together. One of the workers said she knew of somewhere and would contact them to see if a placement would be possible.

8.3 The commissioned service model, Pembrokeshire

There has been a strong focus in Pembrokeshire, as in other parts of COASTAL, on using what has been described as ‘a commissioned service model’ in order to allow services to be designed to meet the needs of specific groups and a time and place to suit that need. Those commissioned services have included:

- *FRAME* is a community re-use organisation providing a supported working environment for people with disabilities and those socially disadvantaged and / or excluded. Via COASTAL, FRAME has skills assessed 331 participants and provided work practice placements to 244 participants. FRAME do not distinguish between disability when assigning roles, all tasks involve all disability groups.

- *Pembrokeshire MIND* were commissioned by COASTAL to deliver a “Living Life to the Full” course designed for people with mental ill health. By splitting the course into shorter sections they were able to offer it to a wide range of participant groups, not just those with mental ill health. As a result, the variety of people accessing their other courses increased.
- *The Anchorage Kitchen* is based in a Learning Disability Day Centre in Pembrokeshire and provides the lunchtime meal service for the centre. A number of COASTAL participants with a range of disabilities who do not receive a service from Learning Disability Day Services are now working in the kitchen.
- *Norman Industries* provides sheltered employment for severely disabled people. Prior to COASTAL, the main focus of the factory in Haverfordwest was employment for people with physical and sensory disabilities. With the support of COASTAL, they developed a fully integrated training facility. Training is currently being provided to participants from all disability groups.

8.4 Next Steps to Work: Care Leavers Project, Carmarthenshire

Funding was provided in Carmarthenshire for an additional member of staff within the Personal Adviser Service (leaving care) in order to improve employment, education and training outcomes for care leavers. It has supported care leavers to:

- Improve the skills needed to find and sustain employment
- Gain accredited and non-accredited learning
- Become more aware of the commitment that is needed to find and sustain employment
- Gain work experience, voluntary experience or paid traineeships

Key achievements of the Next Step to Work project included:

- Engaged 43 care leavers with additional needs
- Supported 18 people to achieve an unaccredited course, 14 to secure a job interview and 16 to enter voluntary work
- Delivered and organised accredited training for 18 people
- Organised and supported 12 traineeships for 52 weeks in the local authority
- Supported 12 participants to return to college or training
- Supported 10 participants to secure full-time work

8.5 B-Leaf and Wood B, Bridgend

B Leaf is a purpose built horticultural nursery which has been operational since June 2005, providing work related activities to COASTAL participants. Located within Bryngarw Country Park in Bridgend, *B Leaf* provides a range of spring, summer and winter bedding plants and a range of hard and soft landscaping services.

All items produced are available to the general public for purchase. COASTAL participants were responsible for the upkeep and grounds maintenance of the formal grounds at the country park. The participants have benefited from specific training through COASTAL, enabling them to use tractors, hydro-static mowers, brush cutters and hedge trimmers. In addition, an NPTC brush-cutting course was funded by COASTAL to provide participants with the necessary skills to maintain equipment. After establishing itself as a prominent plant producer within the authority, *B leaf* provides plants to both the authority's parks department and local Police Authority.

Wood B is a work related wood machining project set up in 1994, located in an industrial workshop in the Tondu Enterprise Centre. COASTAL participants have developed wood machining skills and participants have accessed a range of training to improve their overall woodworking skills. *Wood B* participants undertook a roof refurbishment, with COASTAL funding a Level 2 roof qualification to further enhance their skills. *Wood B* sells products to the general public which include fencing, decking, bird baths, gazebos and sheds.

As examples of their small scale portfolios they have also been commissioned to create bespoke items such as church lecterns and stands for memorial plaques for the Local Authority. *Wood B* have designed and built numerous large scale projects such as the building of *B Leaf* horticultural work related project in Bryngarw Country Park, the Rockwool Centre for Learning and the Sony Environment project that enables local schools to provide outdoor activities to pupils.

8.6 In-Tandem, Neath Port Talbot

The In-Tandem bicycle project which refurbishes unwanted bicycles has achieved Velotech accreditation²³ and is now able to run accredited training courses up to Level 3 which are provided by the project's two chief mechanics who are also ex-participants of the project and are now employed by the local authority. It is the second only in Wales and has supported approximately 120 people in supported work experience.

The project has also developed strong partnerships with Swansea University sports development as part of the Wecycle Initiative. In the summer the In-Tandem project ran a very successful bicycle hire scheme in the summer holidays as part of Swansea Universities water and beach sports facilities. The In-Tandem project has partnered with Swansea Bay Cycles which is developing sustainable transport within Swansea and Neath Port Talbot. As part of the five year plan the aim is to have bicycle routes and accessible bicycle hire stations throughout the county, as well as involving major employers to invest in company bikes for employees to commute. The In-Tandem project has refurbished approximately 60 bikes for the scheme which it also has the servicing and maintenance contracts for and there are plans to significantly grow the scheme over the next three years.

²³ <http://www.velotech-cycling.ltd.uk/index.shtml>

8.7 The Leadbitter Canteen, Neath Port Talbot

The Leadbitter Canteen is an emerging social firm business arrangement employing local people who have historically experienced barriers to gaining paid employment in the open labour market. It was set up by collaboration between the Neath Port Talbot COASTAL project, The Leadbitter Group, the Enfys Foundation and Social Firms Wales.

The canteen opened in January 2014 and caters for construction workers on the Bouygues UK Leadbitter construction site at Fabian Way in Neath Port Talbot, the site is constructing the new University of Wales, Swansea Bay Campus. Serving up to 180 customers per day, the canteen created jobs for five participants of the COASTAL project who are employed by the Enfys Foundation and jointly managed with COASTAL. The participants have progressed from a supported café project.

It operates from 7am to 3pm on Mondays to Fridays providing breakfast, lunch and drinks. The arrangement will continue until the construction contract ends in December 2016 with the potential to bid for a further two year catering contract for the second phase of the build.

So successful has the initiative been and so popular with the workforce, that Nick Toulson, Community Engagement co-ordinator for Bouygues UK, entered the project into the community section of the Bouygues Bâtiment International 2014 Sustainability Awards. These awards encompass the entire Bouygues operations across the world (c.£30bn worth of projects/turnover). Out of 14 community projects short-listed from across the world, the COASTAL Site Canteen project came third, competing against projects from as far afield as Cuba, Turkmenistan and Hong Kong.

8.8 COASTAL football teams, WCADA COASTAL Domino project

The WCADA COASTAL DOMINO Project established two football teams – the COASTAL Blues and the COASTAL Reds, both of whom competed in the Street Football Wales West league. The first training session was held in Brackla in 2011, using an outdoor basketball court, a couple of balls, and jumpers for goalposts. The activity was an instant success and football was added to the weekly timetable. In 2012, the players were pleased to discover that funding had been secured from Sports Wales for weekly football training sessions at Bethlehem Church Life Centre, as well as kits and other equipment. The team chose their favourite strip, decided upon the name “The COASTAL Blues”, and entered into the Play Football 5-a-side league in Swansea, which turned out to be a steep learning curve.

Upon discovering that they were looking for new teams to join Street Football Wales, the decision was made to switch leagues. The first match day at Street Football Wales was a thoroughly enjoyable and positive experience, bringing together a mixture of players from support agencies across Swansea and beyond. At the end of the day, everyone agreed that this was something they wanted to be a part of. The league proved to be so popular that a second team needed to be introduced halfway through the season – “The COASTAL Reds”. Male and female participants from Bridgend, Swansea and Neath Port Talbot have been involved over the course of the season.

Training sessions have continued to be funded by COASTAL and have seen WCADA participants link up with clients from the Arc and Hafal. The CoOASTAL teams have also enjoyed taking part in a number of competitions and friendlies with a variety of teams, including Caswell Clinic, Kickz, the Youth Offending Service and South Wales Police.

8.9 Photo Tales, Swansea

Photo Tales was an innovative photography based Life Skills project, located in Swansea that provided a range of activities for individuals experiencing serious illness, disability and/or social disadvantage. This enabled them to engage with their community and encouraged progression into education and/or employment. These individuals were service users from one of these groups: mental health, learning disabilities, physical disabilities (including sensory impairment), drug and alcohol misuse, brain trauma injury or care leavers. The activities comprised life and photography skills training, exhibitions and books of photography, a Camera Club and the Photo Tales Photography Service.

The Project commenced in September 2011 and completed in December 2013. In that time 70 participants from all services have successfully completed the initial training, passing a Digital Photography qualification. Over 20 participants experienced the Camera Club and several commissions for local charities, organisations and social enterprises were completed successfully. The most prestigious of these was for the Social Enterprise Exchange 2013, which involved a two-day shoot at the Glasgow SECC.

Training

The first activity of Photo Tales was delivering photography and life skills training. The intention of the training was to engender a spirit of trust, cooperation and creativity that enables individuals to illustrate a tale from their life, which they otherwise might find difficult to vocalise. The experience of this process is intended to develop self-worth through the expansion of artistic and personal skills and the opportunity to 'tell it like it is.'

The participants were trained in workshops by the project team. This team included a trained photography teacher who delivered the photography and life skills training, assisted by specialist staff from social services and local agencies who support the participants' individual needs. This team worked with the participants to produce individual photographic narratives that illustrated a tale from their lives. The team delivered photography activities that were designed to develop participants' life skills and a basic understanding of digital photography.

The overarching aim was that the training enhanced participants' self-esteem. The broader learning aims were to use the photography tasks and teaching environment to develop not only participants' photographic skills, but also self-awareness, motivation, goal setting, problem solving, renew their self-identity, working with others, building positive relationships, listening and communicating effectively, taking responsibility, coping with stress, negotiation and decision making.

The participants' Photo Tales were collated to produce an exhibition (one for each of the eight groups) and the exhibition images were used to publish two books (one for each year). The exhibitions and books achieved three primary aims. Firstly, they enhanced the self-esteem of participants, publicly recognising the value and quality of their work. The exhibitions were held in a public gallery and the participants invited their relatives and friends to the opening. Secondly, as the exhibitions were open to the public they raised public awareness of the lives and abilities of individuals living with disadvantage and/or disability. Thirdly, they acted as a springboard for the second stage of the Photo Tales Project, the Photo Tales Camera Club and Photography Service.

Camera Club

As the photography training progressed, participants who completed the photography and life skills training were then invited to join the Photo Tales Camera Club. Staffed by trained members of the Project Team the Camera Club was equipped with the software and cameras that build upon the knowledge gained in the initial training. The Camera Club continues to develop participants' photographic skills; particularly composition and exposure, using a variety of teaching resources and getting out into the locality to practice the knowledge and skills learnt. The club also provided opportunities for participants to continue to formally develop their skills by following a local Further or Higher Education photography course and to consider volunteering for the Photo Tales Photography Service.

Photography Service

The Photo Tales Photography Service worked with Swansea Social Services, SANDS Cymru, WCADA, Swansea Community First areas and coordinators, to provide high quality photographic services for community organisations and social enterprises. The services were free and provided a service that the local communities could otherwise rarely afford, this provided opportunities for community members to develop positive relationships with the project participants. The service provided the trained participants with valuable voluntary work experience, fantastic opportunities to enhance their self-confidence and was supervised by a professional photographer. Work has been completed for SANDS Cymru, WCADA (x3), Indian Society Swansea, Social Enterprise Exchange and several commissions for the COASTAL project.

9 Management and delivery of the project: lessons learnt

This chapter discusses the management and delivery of the COASTAL project with an emphasis on identifying the 'lessons learnt' which can be applied in the future. The discussion draws upon many interviews that have been undertaken with the Regional Management Team and Project Managers over the course of the evaluation, as well as the survey and discussion groups with staff working with participants and delivering services across the region. We have also drawn upon discussions during project board meetings observed by the evaluation team as well as minutes of those and other meetings.

Key points

- The procurement process for COASTAL was complex and slowed progress during the initial stages of the project.
- Both the recruitment and, especially towards the end of the lifetime of the project, the retention of staff has been an issue. Stakeholders also highlighted the importance of having the 'right staff' in place in terms of the effective delivery of the project.
- The regional approach used for COASTAL has both advantages and disadvantages, both of which need to be acknowledged and taken into account when considering utilising such an approach in the future.
- The scale of complexity of the COASTAL project has led to a focus on the work of the Regional Team on administrative and audit functions, at the expense of activities such as the facilitation of networking and sharing of good practice across the region.
- The administrative and audit processes within the COASTAL project have been cumbersome and problematic from a staff perspective but effective in terms of ensuring that the project was 'compliant' from an audit perspective.
- There has been substantial cooperation and sharing of knowledge and expertise at a senior management level within the project but less so at a project delivery level. There was however more 'networking' at a delivery level once the region was split into east and west for those purposes.
- The fact that COASTAL was an employment related project being delivered in a social services context has been challenging in many respects, with stakeholders making reference to the 'change in culture' within the social services setting being promoted by the project.
- 'Work projects' have been developed in a number of areas essentially creating work experience opportunities for participants. These projects provide an essential bridge between social services and employment for participants in response to a generally held view that the gap between a supported environment and employment can be too great for participants who have been economically inactive or unemployed for an extended period.

9.1 The procurement process

It is clear that the procurement process for COASTAL was more complex than had been anticipated, with the project, to some extent at least, suffering from the fact that it was one of the first in Wales in the current round of funding to undertake such a process. As such, there was no model which they were able to follow. The scale of the project also made the procurement process complex.

Each of the local authorities involved in COASTAL (the ‘joint sponsors’) entered into a *Service Level Agreement* with the City and County of Swansea (in their capacity as the ‘lead sponsor’), this agreement covered *the management* of projects in each area. All *delivery* elements of COASTAL (i.e. the provision of support) were however procured on a competitive basis via Buy4Wales/Sell2Wales²⁴. This meant that each local authority (despite the fact that they were joint sponsors) and the organisations delivering the cross-regional elements of COASTAL tendered for the delivery of the services that they provided and have subsequently entered into a *Service Delivery Agreement* with the lead sponsor: a contract that sets out the service to be provided. There was also a subsequent procurement process whereby the local authorities, having contracted with the lead sponsor for the delivery of the overall service in their area, procured organisations to deliver specific services on their behalf.

When reflecting upon the procurement process and the structures that have been put in place, stakeholders generally agreed that the process had been beneficial in a number of ways. In particular, they highlighted that it has set in place very clearly what each organisation / partner was expected to deliver. However, they also highlighted that the process was very difficult and, importantly in the context of the issues being discussed here, time consuming - far more complex and time consuming than had been anticipated when the project was being developed.

9.2 Recruitment and retention of staff

The 2010 evaluation report highlighted the problems caused by delays in the recruitment of staff for the COASTAL delivery teams. A number of issues would seem to have caused the delays including problems in agreeing a job description within the local authorities as well as what was perceived by stakeholders at the time as being a general lack of suitable applicants. Further, it was reported that COASTAL was being perceived as a new (and possibly temporary) service within the local authorities. This had meant that staff were reluctant to leave their ‘permanent’ posts for COASTAL posts. It also contributed to challenges in terms of ‘fitting’ the project into the existing structures within local authorities and what some stakeholders described as a sense of competition between COASTAL and the other (more traditional) services, a matter we will return to later in this chapter.

²⁴ Buy4Wales / Sell2Wales is an online system for advertising contracts that are being procured by public sector organisations - www.sell2wales.co.uk

Towards the end of the lifetime of the project, the retention of staff has become an issue as staff began to look for and move to new posts as they approached the end of their COASTAL contract. In our experience, this is not unusual for European funded projects. However, it does lead to challenges in terms of maintaining the delivery of the service being provided, especially in circumstances where a project is yet to achieve its target outputs and results. This is an important lesson learnt that needs to be taken into account during the planning of future projects.

9.3 Advantages and disadvantages of the regional approach

As has already been frequently noted, COASTAL was a regional project covering six local authority areas in South West Wales. Capturing the lessons learnt in respects of that delivery model, summarised in the table below, was a key part of the work of the evaluation team. These issues are discussed further below.

Table 9.1: Summary of the advantages and disadvantages of the regional model

Advantages	Disadvantages
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • One project management team / point of contact with WEFO • Sharing of resources (e.g. audit, development of administrative systems) • Sharing of knowledge, experience and expertise • A regional (strategic) response to changes such as the introduction of the 'Work Programme' • Sharing of risk (e.g. that targets are missed) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Large geographic area (distances to travel to meetings, etc.) • Substantial differences within the region (e.g. transport network, employment structure) • Substantial differences in how support is provided to the target group in each area / different parts of the region • The financial risk to the lead sponsor is substantial which creates a need for service level agreements, etc. • The audit requirements / administrative workload placed on the lead sponsor / regional team is substantial

9.3.1 Regional Management Team / centralised administration

The single / central 'management' structure in a regional model is perhaps the most obvious potential advantage. The savings here are likely to be substantial, although difficult to quantify. For example, there is a single relationship with WEFO rather than (assuming that COASTAL was split into a separate project in each local authority area) six relationships which would clearly be more resource intensive. There is also one project director rather than six. The advantages of this structure for WEFO in terms of resource required are also clear. The ability to share the knowledge and experience of a single project director will also have advantages.

Key administrative functions are shared in a regional model, being undertaken by the Regional Team. Most notably, the audit process (and team) is centralised which should reduce costs and improve consistency of approach, although the existence of local authority administrative staff with a financial and audit remit again needs to be acknowledged.

The fact that this is such a large (in both financial terms and the amount of activity being undertaken) regional project has meant that the volume of administrative work required has been substantial with the Regional Team having to focus a large proportion of their time and resource to those tasks at the expense of others, including the promotion of networking and sharing of knowledge and expertise across the region.

The amount of money involved has also meant that the project is high risk for the local authorities involved, thereby increasing the emphasis on audit and ensuring that the project has the necessary administrative processes in place. This led one stakeholder to comment: *“What we’ve had is regional performance management rather than a regional project.”* There was also reference to what was perceived to be a “lack of leadership” in operational terms from the Regional Team due to their focus on administrative issues. The reasons for this are however understandable; the project is large, complicated and (due to the large sums of money involved) high risk meaning that the focus on administration is probably inevitable.

It is important to note that the administrative processes that have been put in place by the Regional Team can be considered to have been effective from an audit perspective, as evidenced by the findings of the Welsh Government European Funds Audit Team report in November 2014 which found the overall management and operational arrangements in place for the COASTAL project to be ‘effective (works well).’²⁵ This has however probably come at a cost; the feedback from project staff has been, throughout the lifetime of the evaluation that the administrative burden, has been restrictive and difficult to manage.

9.3.2 A ‘regional response’ to issues

The existence of the Regional Team has allowed a ‘regional response’ to key issues that have arisen during the course of the delivery of the project. There have been two obvious examples of this during the lifetime of the project as discussed below.

ESF support (such as that provided by COASTAL) cannot, in the view of the Welsh Government (please refer to Chapter 11), be used for people eligible for mandatory entry to the Work Programme as it would substitute expenditure, which the Member State would make from its own resources. In light of the introduction by the DWP of the Work Programme in 2011, WEFO therefore issued new guidance to ESF projects which set out which groups would no longer be eligible for support. Although the impact on COASTAL (in terms of the number and type of participants that they could work with) was less than had originally been envisaged (again, please refer to Chapter 11), the project was ‘reconfigured’ to take the changes into account.

²⁵ No deficiencies noted (or only minor deficiencies). Minor deficiencies do not have any significant impact on the effectiveness of management and control systems. Recommendations will be ‘Best Practice’ advice.

This process, and the detailed discussion that was necessary with WEFO and other stakeholders at the time, was undertaken by the Regional Team (drawing in the 'local' teams) with detailed discussions on the matter held at meetings of both the Project Board and Regional Operations Group. In our view, this was more effective and efficient than what would otherwise have been a more local response to the changes being introduced. The regional structure also provided a valuable opportunity for senior staff from across the region to discuss the wider implications of the changes being introduced.

The second example relates to the response to the imposing of a 'special condition' by WEFO in August 2013, in light of their concerns about the performance of the project (specifically the employment result) increasing the ESF grant retention rate from the standard 10% to 20%. The introduction of the special condition had serious financial implications for the project given the amount of ESF funding involved (a 20% retention would equate to £4.5million). In response to this the Regional Team, drawing in the managers from each local authority, developed a plan which included a series of actions aimed at improving performance which was subsequently discussed and agreed at the Regional Operations Group and Project Board level. Alongside this plan, a process of streamlining project services was introduced which allowed for a significant level of de-commitment of ESF grant funding. As a result of these processes, it was then possible for a revision of the project's targets to be agreed with WEFO and performance improved substantially (please refer to Chapter 4). This is another example of regional cooperation to overcome any issue being facilitated by the Regional Team. Our view as evaluators is that these are important benefits generated by the regional model employed for the COASTAL project.

9.3.3 Sharing of risk

Stakeholders highlighted the benefit of being able to share risk amongst the partners, specifically in terms of achieving project outputs and expenditure targets; any under-performance in one part of the project could be mitigated by another. This risk is however still, to a large extent with the lead sponsor, in this case, the City and County of Swansea, who have the contract with WEFO to deliver the project and would be subject to any claw-back of funding. Whilst service level agreements will address this, it is still perceived as a substantial risk for any local authority taking on that role. This needs to be acknowledged as it could be a serious block on any future regional projects.

9.3.4 Networking and sharing expertise & good practice

One of most commonly identified benefits of the regional approach identified during discussions with stakeholders over the course of the evaluation was the networking and sharing of expertise that it potentially provides. At a strategic / senior management level, such networking was facilitated via the Project Board²⁶ and the Regional Operations Group²⁷ which have met on a regular basis throughout the lifetime of the project to oversee the project at a strategic level and discuss programme level management issues, examples of which have already been discussed above. The Regional Operations Group met, in various forms every month from July 2009, meaning that there have been more than 60 meetings in total. The Project Board met over 20 times over the lifetime of the project. **Many of these meetings have been observed by the evaluation team and it is clear that an effective working relationship has developed between those involved.**

Cooperation and networking has however been less apparent at a 'delivery level.' Structures have been put in place for regional and sub-regional networking, but the number of such meetings that took place was limited due to a lack of attendance. Reasons given for this included a "lack of time" to attend, especially when those meetings could require a substantial amount of travelling due to the geographic size of the region. 'Whole region' meetings were subsequently replaced with sub-regional (east and west) meetings with attendance at those meetings apparently improving. Yet, it was apparent that some staff were meeting each other for the first time in a number of instances when attending evaluation workshops relatively late in the lifetime of the project. This must be considered as being a missed opportunity to share knowledge and experience of staff. It should however be noted, that there were instances where the networking that has taken place was described as being very valuable. For example, the team in Ceredigion CC highlighted how they had benefited from advice and guidance provided from across the region when their activities were being set-up.²⁸

The obvious question is whether the advantages of the regional model are greater than the disadvantages. Our conclusion is that, in the case of a project as large and complex as COASTAL, despite the advantages of the central Regional Team, the region was probably too large. A smaller area (splitting the region within the COASTAL project in two) would probably have been more effective and allow for greater scope and opportunity for networking and sharing of knowledge and expertise.

²⁶ Which included representatives at Senior Officer level (Director / Head of Service), from each of the Joint Sponsoring Authorities, the Regional Project Director, the Monitoring & Compliance Manager and the Project Managers from each of the local authorities.

²⁷ The Project Director, the Compliance Manager and the teams responsible for the operational management of the service delivery within each local authority area and the cross-regional projects.

²⁸ As previously noted, the activities in Ceredigion CC and Bridgend CBC started later than in the other local authority areas delivering the project. One of the benefits of this was that they were able to draw on the experience of setting up the project in the other participating local authorities.

The final round of interviews with project managers (December 2014) identified a potential alternative model for utilising the knowledge, skills and experience of particular staff in particular parts of the region. It was suggested that members of staff (in particular project managers) from within a local authority could be appointed as the lead for a particular element of the project or activity on a region wide basis, based on the fact that they had particular expertise, knowledge and experience. For example, a project manager from one local authority could be asked to take the lead on the development of 'work projects' across the region (see Chapter 8). The logic of this is very strong as it would allow a project to utilise the knowledge and skills that exist in one or a few local authority areas across the region, without necessarily having to recruit that individual into a regional team on a full-time basis. It may also reduce the pressure on the Regional Team to lead on those aspects of the project.

9.4 Finding a balance between supporting the target group and maintaining a focus on employment (the targets)

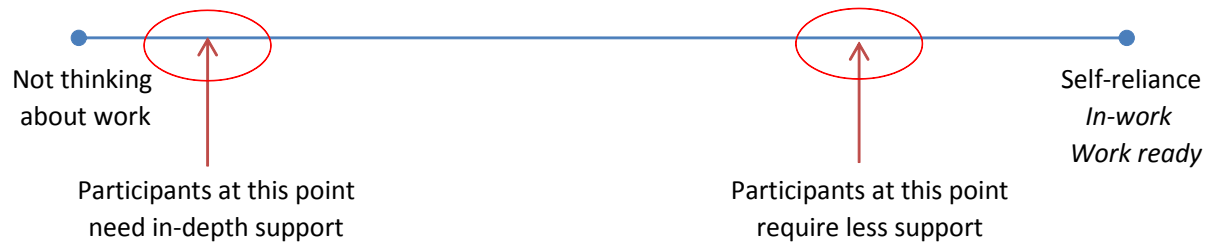
Much of the discussion with stakeholders at each stage of the evaluation focused on the balance between the provision of effective support to the target group for the COASTAL project (those furthest from the labour market) and the focus on employment related outcomes (and associated targets), dictated by the funding being accessed to support the delivery of the project. This section discussed this issue, firstly from the perspective of the key performance indicators and the targets set for the project and secondly from a staff perspective.

9.4.1 The targets

During an interview for the first evaluation report in 2010, one stakeholder described the situation as follows, summing up the view of most of those interviewed with regards to the targets that had been set: *"the targets were ambitious when we agreed them, now they might be impossible."* This shows that potential to achieve the targets has been an issue for the project from a very early stage. Indeed, one of the recommendations of the 2010 evaluation report was the Regional Project Board consider the need to *formally* introduce changes to the COASTAL project to reflect the shift in economic conditions (i.e. the recession) since the project was conceived (2008) including discussions with WEFO on the potential need to adjust targets to reflect current circumstances.

Figure 9.1 attempts to illustrate the fact that COASTAL has worked with a wide variety of participants who are at various points between 'not thinking about work' and being 'self-reliant and work ready.' Participants who are towards the left side of the line are the furthest away from the labour market; they have the most distance to travel if they are going to move into employment and, therefore require the most support. Participants who are towards the right hand side of the line are closer to the labour market and, hence, they will require less support to become 'work ready'.

Figure 9.1: An illustration of the continuum of participants' COASTAL will work with



Many of those participants that the COASTAL project worked with were, when they were initially engaged, towards the left side of the line in the graphic; those who are furthest from the labour market and who require in-depth support *before* they are in a position to even contemplate employment. This was envisaged when COASTAL was devised. However, it underlines the challenges that the project always faced in terms of achieving some of its targets and especially the employment target. Again, the impact of the recession on the project and its ability to meet the original targets also needs to be taken into account (please refer to Chapter 12) as does the fact that other schemes and projects have been introduced during the lifetime of COASTAL supporting the same target group (see Chapter 11).

All these 'external factors' meant that the targets set, especially employment, were always likely to be challenging. The obvious question is whether the targets were ever realistic or achievable? When this was discussed with the Regional Team (responsible for developing the original business plan) they explained that the targets were based on the experience of delivering COASTAL type interventions in Swansea during the previous round of Structural Funds (2000-2006). Essentially, the achievements in Swansea during that period were extrapolated to obtain an estimate for the region as a whole, taking into account population data and so on. The rationale for this approach is clear, however, it does not take into account the different circumstances that apply across the region (for example, existing support structures), although we would accept that this would be difficult to do without looking at the matter in a lot of detail, which would probably not be practical when developing a proposal and applying for funding. The key to this issue is however that there needs to be flexibility to introduce changes once a project has been approved and detailed plans for its implementation have been put in place to ensure that the targets that are set are realistic and achievable.

9.4.2 The views of staff

There was widespread concern amongst those project delivery staff interviewed throughout the course of the evaluation (especially those working on a day-to-day basis with participants and from a 'social services' background) that COASTAL was *too* focused on encouraging participants to move towards or into employment.

A substantial proportion of the discussions with staff during the workshops in 2010, 2012 and 2014 centred on issues (positive and negative) relating to the focus of the project on achieving and monitoring employment related results and outcomes. The negative comments were indicative of a common view amongst some (although not all) project staff about the focus on employment and a monitoring system that is built around tracking participants' progress towards employment. In the opinion of some staff (usually those with a background in social services or providing support to participants with drug issues, etc.), this is not appropriate given the client group that they are working with who are, in their words often *"not even thinking about work when we start to work with them."* The positive comments made were very supportive of the focus on employment and the need to help participants progress towards employment. This is an indication of the two schools of thought that are apparent amongst COASTAL staff.

Despite this, alongside 'paperwork' and 'red tape,' the most frequently noted weakness of the COASTAL project identified in the 2013 staff survey were the targets that had been set for the project and in particular their emphasis largely on employment related achievements, as illustrated by the following examples of the comments made during group discussions:

- *"I thought my job was about helping people but all everyone is doing is panicking about targets."*
- *"The targets are unrealistic and there is a panic about achieving targets and the possibility of having to give money back."*
- *"COASTAL is too target focused and not person focused enough."*
- *"Training to get people closer to the work market is difficult when you have someone so far removed and it is clear they just can't compete...you send them to interviews and it is demoralising for them. Isn't it better to get them into volunteering?"*

The introduction of the action plan and the streamlining of some services in response to the increase in the WEFO retention rate in 2013, increased the emphasis within the project on achieving employment outcomes and targets, with some project managers commenting that targets had not been 'high enough up the agenda' prior to that, despite the fact that targets were part of the service level agreements in place with all providers. Indeed, the service provided was changed in some areas as part of this action plan including the introduction of a central 'employment team' in Swansea.

This change in emphasis was also apparent in the discussions with staff during the 2014 workshops and in the responses to the 2013 staff survey. Although the change cannot be quantified, discussions with staff at these later stages in the lifetime of the project would suggest that there was a greater acceptance amongst staff that all the activities being undertaken were contributing towards a progression of the participant *towards employment* and that they were more comfortable with this. Staff described what they perceived to be a shift in the focus of the project (in terms of how it was being delivered) from a 'social service' project to an 'employment' project.

During interviews, senior staff often made reference to the ‘change in culture’ that COASTAL was seeking to achieve (or contribute towards) in terms of how support for the target group is delivered and a need to shift from an approach which is based on providing support to one which is focused on progressing participants out of the support structure. There were also frequent references during interviews throughout the evaluation to the ‘clash’ between those with a social services background and supporters of the employment focused approach; as one project manager put it *“it’s been a battle throughout.”* There is further discussion of this point in the following section.

Senior staff also noted that the individuals employed to deliver key elements of the COASTAL project had changed over the lifetime of the project, with ‘people with the right mind-set’ or ‘from an employment background rather than a social services background’ being in place for the latter stages of the project. The need to have the ‘right staff in place’ was a constant theme in interviews with senior staff during the latter stages of the evaluation.

9.5 Adding value and changing the way support is provided and the type of support provided to the target group

As is apparent from the discussion above, COASTAL was clearly an ambitious project in terms of the change in approach that it was seeking to help to introduce. The ‘lesson learnt’ is that such a change can be a challenging and long-term process to be introduced. When stakeholders were asked to describe their ambitions for the COASTAL project, their main response (other than the provision of support to participants) was that the project should facilitate *a change* in the way support is provided by:

- Providing support on a pan-disability basis;
- Providing a facility for moving participants forward from simply being supported (e.g. in a day centre) to becoming more self-sustaining, a big part of which is to move towards employment; and
- Increasing the role of the third sector in terms of the provision of ‘supported employment projects’ for participants.

These ambitions were consistent across the six local authority areas participating in the project. However, the starting point in each area was not consistent; some areas having made greater progress towards achieving the above ambitions pre-COASTAL than others. In some areas the change being introduced via COASTAL was considered to be radical, for example, this is the first time such a service has been available in Neath Port Talbot. In other areas, for example Pembrokeshire, COASTAL was considered as more of a progression of the model that was already in place.

The flexibility within the project which allowed local authorities to provide support in a way which best fits with the structures they had in place already was clearly critical in terms of creating a regional project; the local authorities would not have joined the project without that flexibility. However, it did lead to inconsistency in terms of how the project was delivered across the region.

The obvious question is - does that matter? Most stakeholders argued that it does not, as long as the outcomes of the project are being achieved and, as evaluators, we would support that view. But, the inconsistencies in terms of delivery that such an approach generates need to be taken into account; it is a consequence of a regional approach. There is a risk that flexibility will allow the focus of the project to 'drift' in some areas (e.g. the focus on achieving employment outcomes becomes diluted). Again, this is a lesson that can be transferred to future regional projects under development.

It is important to note that the reaction to the introduction of COASTAL was not universally favourable amongst those that work within 'the sector,' including those directly involved with the delivery of COASTAL services. The majority of comments made to the evaluation team were positive and identified COASTAL as filling a gap in the support that was available; creating 'a bridge' between support for those with disabilities and employment related support. However, others were sceptical, especially those who had been working in the sector for a significant period.

A number of stakeholders identified the fact that COASTAL was an opportunity to "*manage the process of change.*" In their view, the way support was provided was inevitably going to change for a number of reasons, but primarily because it was unlikely that sufficient funding would be available to maintain the current system of providing long-term support to a significant number of individuals. A change needed to be introduced, which means that only those most in need are kept within the support system for a significant amount of time. Those with the potential to become 'self-sufficient' (and therefore move into employment / become economically active) should be supported to do so. COASTAL was an opportunity to manage that change over a period of time rather than have the change imposed at some point in the future.

As part of the 2013 staff survey, project staff were asked to comment on the extent to which COASTAL had changed the way in which support was provided to participants in their area; 86% (81/94) said that there had been a change. The following are typical examples of the comments made:

- *"Without COASTAL the majority of our participants wouldn't get any support or just basic generic support."*
- *"It has helped to start an acceptance of a pan-disability approach across many organisations and services..."*
- *"COASTAL has identified a specific need for employment projects for people who face barriers."*
- *"More education and training, linked to employment. More employment opportunities."*
- *"We have now become more structured and focused on what it is we aim to achieve with individuals."*

The role of the COASTAL Project Manager in each local authority was highlighted as critical in terms of promoting (and pushing forward) this process of change. It is interesting to note that the seniority of the 'project manager' differed between the local authorities, with some authorities employing a more senior member of staff to undertake that role. It is also apparent that the amount of support the project manager has received from senior management team level staff within the local authority has varied. The evaluation has found that this has been very important to the success of COASTAL in terms of integrating with and promoting change within the local authority.

In some areas, it seems clear that the project manager has not been senior enough to 'push through' the change in approach being introduced by COASTAL and / or the manager did not have sufficient support at a senior level within the local authority. As one project manager put it; "the [Social Services] Centre Managers simply don't listen to me... I don't have enough clout." In other areas, the COASTAL project manager has been senior enough to 'insist' that changes are introduced and that COASTAL services were fully integrated. This is another important lesson learnt; project managers must be senior enough to be able to drive any changes that are necessary to fully implement a project such as COASTAL.

9.6 Creating a bridge between social services and employment

There is reference above to the need to create 'a bridge' between the support that is provided by social services and employment. This was a common theme in discussions with project managers regarding lessons learnt during the delivery of COASTAL.

A number of stakeholders described the 'massive leap' that participants needed to make to achieve the transition from 'supported' to employed and that this was a substantial barrier to achieving employment outcomes. The solution to this has been in a number of instances to set-up projects that fill that gap. For example, a number of work projects have been set up in Neath Port Talbot (please refer to the case studies in Chapter 8) whilst existing 'sheltered employment' providers in Pembrokeshire have been utilised (e.g. Norman Industries²⁹).

These projects were frequently referred to as examples of where COASTAL has been successful. Because they were being set up as commercial (income generating) social enterprises, they were also key parts of the exit strategy for COASTAL in a number of areas. They also offer the opportunity to create actual employment opportunities for participants who progress to becoming paid employees of the projects being set up (usually employed at the current time by the local authority but ultimately possibly employed by the social enterprises if and when it becomes self-sustaining).

²⁹ Trading for over thirty years Norman Industries specialises in the design and manufacture of furniture, a wide range of applications. Norman Industries is a supported enterprise and a member of BASE, currently employing fifteen people, fourteen of whom are disabled.

http://www.pembrokeshire.gov.uk/content.asp?nav=101,100&parent_directory_id=646&id=5819&d1=0

These projects are essentially intermediary labour market (ILM) projects.³⁰ The ILM model aims to support individuals back into employment by developing skills, confidence, job readiness and basic training. It does this by offering paid work experience opportunities alongside a range of other support such as coaching and training. The model recognises that employment opportunities are generally greater for those in work and those who can demonstrate work experience. They also recognise that confidence is developed by participating in a 'real' work environment. An ILM project has in fact been funded in Wales as part of the current round of Structural Funds, which an evaluation has found to be an effective mechanism for helping participants into employment.³¹ The logic of integrating ILM activities into COASTAL is very clear, especially in a situation where it is difficult to find work experience opportunities within the private sector or indeed the public sector.

The use of the term 'employment' was again part of the discussions about the 'work projects'. One project manager made the following points during a discussion on the matter:

"It shouldn't be about just employment... it's about helping people to engage in a meaningful activity which develops the skills that they will need to ultimately secure employment. Sometimes it's as simple as not calling it work experience... we're using these projects to provide an opportunity for participants to do something meaningful that helps them to develop the skills that they will need to gain employment later on."

This is an important point and underlines the fact that COASTAL is promoting a journey *towards* work rather than simply focusing on working to get participants *into* work.

9.7 Exit strategy and maintaining the service beyond the end of COASTAL

When discussing the changes that they hope COASTAL will facilitate, stakeholders interviewed for the first evaluation report (2010), stressed that they expected that such a change would take longer than the lifetime of COASTAL to achieve. Accordingly, it was critical that structures were put in place to continue the developments post COASTAL. They also stressed that, in light of the time taken to set up COASTAL, discussions on any successor to the project needed to begin as soon as possible.

³⁰ More information about ILMs can be found here: <http://www.jrf.org.uk/sites/files/jrf/970.pdf>

³¹ An evaluation of the WCVAs ILM project can be found here: http://www.wcva.org.uk/media/217025/wavehill_-_final_evaluation_of_ilm.pdf

Staff were also clearly concerned about the ‘exit strategy’ for COASTAL at each stage of the evaluation process, as illustrated by the following comments made during the 2013 workshops with staff:

- *“The exit strategy should have been looked at and implemented at the start of the project, it feels like we are just waiting to see if another round of funding comes available and then we’ll just grab that.”*
- *“There is no exit strategy and people are starting to panic – what is going to happen to the participants?”*
- *“What happens to 17/18 years olds coming through, if we engage with them, in a year’s time what do we do with them?”*
- *“This project has been a great success to participants and all workers. The closure of the project is one that should definitely not be happening and is upsetting to hear that some participants will be affected due to this. This project most certainly should be carried on for more lives to be changed in a positive way.”*

Staff highlighted that in many cases individuals being supported are being taken on a ‘journey’ towards work that will, for many, take a long time; longer than the lifetime of the COASTAL project in many cases. As noted frequently throughout this report, the individuals concerned are also often those furthest away from the labour market and staff were concerned that change (more specifically, a withdrawal) in the support provided could lead to progress that has been made being lost.

Discussions did begin early in the lifetime of the project, with the establishment in 2009 of a group to consider the matter in detail, which includes a range of organisations including Social Firms Wales, New Work Connections, the Wales Co-operative Centre, Collaborative Communities, the Welsh Social Enterprise Coalition and the WCVA as well as the COASTAL Regional Coordination Team. This group did not however progress as planned, there were however other meetings such as region wide staff conferences to discuss the ‘exit’ from COASTAL. **The effectiveness of the work undertaken at a regional level to discuss the ‘exit strategy’ for the project is however questionable. Where elements of the COASTAL project have been ‘mainstreamed’ it is apparent that the catalyst for that development has come from within the local authority rather than at a regional level.**

9.8 Administrative issues and communication

A number of administrative issues were raised during discussions with staff and contractors over the course of the evaluation including:

- General concerns about how the project was being monitored (as discussed above);
- Issues relating to the database being used to record key monitoring data; and
- Perceived ‘constant’ changes in administrative processes and requirements.

The burden the administrative process has on project staff was a constant criticism with the following being typical of the comments made:

- *“...we have to take staff off working with service users in order to get the paperwork done.”*
- *“All activity has to be recorded on the database and in each participant file and each Pathways advisor has their own record where they have to record every conversation, every email, etc. on a comment form and an interview monitoring form.”*
- *“All staff have to complete timesheets but they have to be specific i.e. ‘monitoring’ would not be acceptable, it has to show x time on answering emails etc.”*
- *“All we do is have audits!”*

These comments and concerns need to be noted, especially given that it is said to have reduced the time staff had available to work with participants. However, it is important to also take into account that, in many cases, this was the first time the staff concerned have been involved in the delivery of a European funded project, this was especially the case for staff from a social services background. Accordingly, they may not be familiar with such administration / monitoring processes and this is one of the main reasons why they are uncomfortable with it. European funded projects are inevitably administratively complex to administer; the key is how you manage that administrative burden. The view of staff generally is that the burden has been too much. However the positive findings of the August 2014 audit of the project suggest that the approach has been effective.

The administrative changes that have been made to the project during its lifetime have clearly been frustrating for staff as illustrated by the following examples of the comments made:

- *“It [targets] has become a joke with us, they keep changing them so we don’t take any notice anymore.”*
- *“We thought we have achieved around 700 positive outcomes but now, with all the changes, it is about 200.”*
- *“Poor planning in advance has led to the project continuously changing over time and the goal posts constantly being moved. This has led to confusion and annoyance from both project workers and participants.”*

Notable ‘administrative’ changes introduced during the lifetime of the project include the change to the definition for the result ‘other positive outcomes’ introduced part-way through the life-time of the project, which limited the results that could be claimed as other positive outcomes³² (February 2012) and the changes necessary as a result of the introduction of the Work Plan. Both these changes were beyond the control of the project management team, yet, it is apparent from the comments made during discussions with staff that they are unaware of this and the reasons for the changes. Hence, there has been a tendency in some instances to believe the changes have been introduced at the request of the Regional Management Team, rather than a requirement by WEFO. This highlights a communication issue within the project, although it is again important to recognise that the size and complexity of the COASTAL project inevitably made communication challenging.

9.9 Delivering the cross-cutting themes

9.9.1 Environmental sustainability

Much of the COASTAL project has been delivered by public sector organisations or those with extensive experience of providing services procured by the public sector. As such, those organisations all have, as one would expect, environmental policies in place and promote recycling of paper and so on. COASTAL has however gone beyond that basic integration of the environmental theme, in particular in terms of some of the activities being undertaken by COASTAL participants and some of the organisations contracted to deliver services as part of the project.

For example, *FRAME* is a community ‘re-use’ organisation providing a supported working environment for disabilities and those socially disadvantaged and / or excluded. As already noted in the provision case studies chapter (section 8.3), via COASTAL in Pembrokeshire, FRAME has skills assessed 331 participants and provided work practice placements to 244 participants. Another example is the *In-Tandem bicycle project* which refurbishes unwanted bicycles, ran a bicycle hire scheme in the summer holidays and has partnered with Swansea Bay Cycles which is developing sustainable transport within Swansea and Neath Port Talbot (please refer to section 8.6). From an environmental sustainability perspective, these activities have a double benefit in that they promote recycling and environmental awareness amongst participants and also recycle materials that would otherwise be sent to landfill.

³² The definition in question is included in Appendix 2.

Projects such as *B-Leaf* and *Wood B* in Bridgend (please refer to section 8.5) also promoted awareness of the environment amongst participants by allowing participants to undertake landscaping activities, etc. In Swansea, COASTAL has collaborated with the *Down to Earth project*³³ (described as ‘a centre for practical sustainability and natural building’) over a number of years to complete a number of projects. Down to Earth provides fully accredited training in a range of subjects designed to deliver vocational training in traditional building skills, combined with adventurous activities and sustainable natural food production. The site demonstrates best practice in blending traditional, eco-friendly building methods with the most up-to-date technological advances in renewable energy generation.

9.9.2 Equality of opportunity

COASTAL has, in the main, been a re-active service providing support to the participants that were referred to the project. As such, there has been very little action to target any specific groups on the basis of promoting equality of opportunity. COASTAL was set up to provide support to any individual who was economically inactive and unemployed as a result of illness, disability, substance misuse problems and/or the serious social disadvantage associated with the transition from long-term care into adulthood. Within this group however there was no targeting of specific sub-groups such as those from BME groups, a specific gender or age group. As a number of project managers put it when discussing this issue; *“the project was open to all.”*

When this was discussed with project managers, they argued that this was the correct approach for a number of reasons. These included an awareness that there were specialist providers who targeted specific groups in the community such as women or young people and COASTAL should not replicate those services. Rather, it could refer participants to those services as required or, if necessary and there was sufficient demand, commission those specialist providers to deliver support to a specific group of participants. It was also argued that the project did not have the resource or capacity to ‘target’ specific groups within the community.

As shown by the analysis of the participant data in Chapter 4 (section 4.8), this would seem to have led to a situation where there is a slight in-balance in the gender of the participants supported. The number of participants from BME groups or specific age groups does not however seem disproportional.

³³ <http://www.downtoearthproject.org.uk/>

Delivery of COASTAL has involved engaging with businesses / employers and there has been an emphasis on changing attitudes and behaviour in relation to employing those within the COASTAL target group (i.e. those who were economically inactive and unemployed as a result of illness, disability, etc.). The evaluation has found that the approach in this respect has been on developing 'a relationship' with a group of employers that had been engaged rather than a more 'broad brush' approach targeting businesses more generally (e.g. a marketing or promotional campaign). This has included the work undertaken with employers / businesses to create work experience opportunities, whereby staff have spent time discussing the perceived barriers to employing those from the COASTAL target group with businesses and, as one project manager put it, "*persuading them to give a participant a chance.*"

In some instances, the 'relationship' that has been developed has been broader than just to create a work experience opportunity for a participant. The best example of this is the relationship which has been developed with the Leadbitter Group which has led to the creating of employment for five participants (please refer to the case study in section 8.7). Importantly, as well as creating five jobs for participants, this has also created a situation where literally hundreds of people a day are coming into contact with COASTAL participants in a working environment. This has not been reviewed, but the hope is that this will contribute towards changing the attitude and behaviour of those people in respects of the groups being supported by COASTAL.

These are excellent examples of how a project such as COASTAL can promote the CCTs which should be shared with future projects as examples of good practice.

10 Review of literature on supporting people into employment and the ‘theory of change’

This brief literature review explores research that helps us understand the challenges in supporting people with significant health barriers into employment. It outlines the latest thinking on how to promote successful and sustainable transitions, and considers how these insights could be used in support of COASTAL.

Key Points:

- Research has identified health conditions as a significant barrier to employment.
- Unemployment carries with it a number of negative effects, including increased risk of experiencing stress or depression.
- There are a number of protective factors that increase the probability of securing employment, including self-efficacy and job-search skills.
- These factors can be effectively developed through appropriate intervention and support, many of which were provided within the COASTAL project.

10.1 Why providing support is important

Disabling health conditions are the biggest barrier to employment, greater than the effects of gender, ethnicity or lone-parenthood. Data from the Labour Force Survey exploring prevalence and incidence, suggests that unemployment is considerably higher amongst people with disabilities than the population as a whole. The research also reveals that a significant proportion of unemployed people with health conditions would like to work, at just over 24%. This is compared to just 7% of the able-bodied unemployed population, suggesting that disabled people face a greater range of barriers, including discrimination, in finding and securing work.³⁴

Unemployment can have a significant negative impact on individuals. Most research suggests that the long-term effects of unemployment on subjective and objective measures of well-being are negative. Protracted periods of inactivity, for example, can contribute to higher levels of stress and depression, which can in turn reduce the likelihood of finding and sustaining employment.³⁵ Unemployment is also correlated with low levels of self-efficacy, confidence in a person’s own ability to achieve certain outcomes. Lack of self-efficacy can lead to an unemployed person resigning to their situation, fostering the idea that they will never get a job.

³⁴ <http://www.ons.gov.uk/ons/search/index.html?newquery=Labour%20Force%20Survey>

³⁵ <http://www.bmj.com/content/322/7280/204>

Research also suggests that for everyone, transitions from either unemployment or education into employment are becoming longer, more complex and increasingly conditional. In part, these developments reflect structural shifts that are taking place within the labour market, including the increasing casualisation of employment, lower levels of in-work training, and greater levels of self-employment. As of April 2014, it was estimated that 1.4 million people were on zero-hour contracts which afford them very little job or income security.³⁶ These apparent structural shifts in labour market characteristics are placing different demands upon people, requiring them to adapt and develop different approaches to finding work or in building new skills or expertise.³⁷

There are compelling ethical, social, and clinical reasons for helping people with health conditions overcome these barriers to employment and hence, for funding projects such as COASTAL. From an ethical standpoint, the right to work is enshrined within the Universal Declaration of Human Rights 1948 and has been incorporated into national legislation, including the UK Equality Act 2010. From a social standpoint, unemployment can contribute to increased social exclusion, further exacerbating issues such as material deprivation and social isolation. From a clinical standpoint, employment may lead to improvements in outcomes across a range of well-being measures, including self-esteem, alleviating psychiatric symptoms and reducing dependency. Stable and meaningful employment, for example, is a strong protective factor in helping people to address pre-existing mental health problems.³⁸

10.2 Employment programmes as agents of change

COASTAL, as with other employability programmes, seeks to bring about meaningful and lasting change to people's lives. Employment programmes themselves represent a purposive action that is intended to strengthen factors that may help people overcome any barriers to employment and help them build the confidence and skills to succeed. Hopefully, it is a means to achieving positive outcomes for individuals and communities alike.

Employment programmes are fundamentally change strategies. They encompass a set of explicit and implicit assumptions concerning the factors that people need to make a successful transition into employment. They consider (or should do) how a person's characteristics interact with a dynamic labour market, and map out processes and procedures by which to achieve positive long-term outcomes for people seeking work. Programmes are built on assumptions and expectations concerning the pathways between cause and effect – for example: improving a person's self-efficacy may increase job search activity, which may in turn result in a positive employment outcome.

This is essentially a description of the basic 'COASTAL process' which is focused on an assessment of the needs of each individual and then the development of a bespoke plan to support that individual to achieve the agreed goals, including employment.

³⁶<http://www.ons.gov.uk/ons/rel/mro/news-release/ons-reveals-first-business-estimates-of-employee-contracts-without-guaranteed-hours/nghcs0414.html>

³⁷<http://www.jrf.org.uk/topic/future-labour-markets>

³⁸<http://www.bmj.com/content/322/7280/204>

10.3 Protective factors supporting successful transitions into employment

Central to any projects' theory of change³⁹ are the factors or outcomes that support people into employment. Research has identified a number of protective factors that can be built-up through intervention and support. Drawing on an ecological model, these factors are broken down into broadly individual characteristics, those that influence an individual's response to unemployment, and community or societal factors that can shape people's overall experiences of finding and securing work.

Individual characteristics:

There are a number of individual level characteristics that shape people's successful transitions into employment. These factors are responsive to intervention and support, and can be built up through projects such as COASTAL.

Self-efficacy:

Self-efficacy is a person's belief that they are able to perform a task successfully. A person's sense of their own capability can influence their perception, motivation and performance towards employment related activity. Self-efficacy influences the goals and career objectives people set for themselves, the effort they exert in finding work and their ability to overcome adversity or setbacks. The more confident a person, the more likely they are to take steps towards finding employment and to be persistent in their actions.

Attitudes and Levels of Motivation:

An individual's outlook and approach to learning and work. This includes general feelings about participating in work environments, which can be central to achieving and maintaining successful transitions. Positive attitudes towards employment, for example, are significant predictors of job search activity and intensity. However attitudinal and motivational factors are the least responsive to intervention and support, as they are built up over time and negative attitudes, once embedded are difficult to change or dislodge.⁴⁰

Employability Skills and Behaviours:

The attributes and behaviours required to succeed in the workplace, including professionalism, effective communication, teamwork and leadership skills.

Qualifications, Education and Training:

The acquisition of work related knowledge and skills through school, college or training. This includes qualifications and attainment that help demonstrate the relevant competencies required of a role.

³⁹ Theory of Change essentially described the links between activities, outcomes, and context of an intervention (i.e. programme, scheme or project). It involves the specification of an explicit theory of "how" and "why" a project might cause an effect. For further information, please refer to page 57 of The Magenta Book: Guidance for evaluation, HM Treasury (2011), available here: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/the-magenta-book>

⁴⁰ <http://journals.cambridge.org/action/displayAbstract?fromPage=online&aid=8988782&fileId=S0047279413000317>

Experience and Social Networks:

Past work experience and social networks that enable people to demonstrate competence, build trust and open up work opportunities. These include work experience, involvement in the community and the social networks that are developed as a result.

Career Management Skills:

The knowledge and skills required to find and secure a job. This includes having career direction, understanding how to search and apply for jobs and the ability to articulate the value of their potential contribution to employers.

There are individualised instances to suggest that COASTAL has had a positive impact in promoting the development of individual protective factors. Qualitative participant survey data demonstrates that there have been self-reported improvements across all domains, including self-efficacy, attitudes and levels of motivation. This suggests that COASTAL has the components and approach to successfully promote employment related protective factors under certain conditions. The evidence is however, limited in its ability to accurately determine the overall impact of the programme against these outcomes, and to isolate the influence of other factors, such as community characteristics or access to other forms of support in shaping outcomes.

Community characteristics:

There are a range of other factors than can contribute to successful transitions into work. Community characteristics are more difficult to foster and promote with programmes that work solely with individuals, however they have a significant bearing on an individual's ability to gain employment. A programme that effectively supports the development of positive self-efficacy, for example, will be unable to help an individual into work if the local labour market is not flexible in its approach to recruiting staff with poor health histories.

Local resources:

Social and community support available to individuals. These include family, friends and the wider community that can be called on to support individuals overcome barriers to employment. This level of informal support can be fundamental in helping individuals overcome adversity, including unemployment and ill-health.

Employers:

The recruitment attitudes and practices of employers. Open and inclusive recruitment practices are essential for people with significant health limiting conditions. They include approaches including widening access for those with mobility issues, acquiring or modifying equipment – for example by providing specially adapted keyboards for a visually impaired person or someone with arthritis – or allowing a person requiring rehabilitative support the flexibility to attend appointments during working hours. There are often productivity and cost concerns for employers taking on staff that have histories of ill-health which need to be overcome if they are to open-up opportunities to all.

Labour market:

Local labour market characteristics, including turn-over and the scope of opportunities available. This has a significant bearing on whether people are able to find work.

An enabling state:

The regulatory context which shape employer and community responses to employment, such as providing financial incentives for employers to take-on people with disabilities or health limiting conditions.

Although many of these community protective factors are outside of the direct control of employment programmes, they will shape the outcomes of individuals accessing them.

In assessing the impact of these factors on the COASTAL region and members of the community, there appears to be very little research that seeks to map out relevant community characteristics. There is very little research that highlights the extent of community assets and levels of informal support across the UK. Further, there are no apparent official indices that seek to understand and map employer's attitudes and practices around open and inclusive recruitment practices.

In terms of the local labour market, relevant statistics are explored in chapter 10 which highlights the economic context under which COASTAL operates. Key indicators suggest that the broader economy has recovered since the recession and that the labour market is more buoyant. There have been a number of significant structural changes, however, including larger numbers of people entering self-employment and more conditional employment, such as zero-hour contracts. These structural changes may not benefit people accessing COASTAL, for they place greater demands on a group with considerable barriers to employment already.

10.4 Major theories of change

On an individual level, there are four major theoretical perspectives that are used to guide the design of many employment programmes in reaching for their objectives. Each theory sets out a range of assumptions about how people grow and develop, and therefore how programmes can effectively support people into employment. Each has slightly different sets of assumptions that may not entirely resonate with COASTAL delivery, however they are included here for illustrative purposes:

Behavioural learning theory:

This theory suggests that developing employability skills, including job search activities, are more effective when the desired behaviours are socially reinforced, performed by support staff or peers. In addition, timely and suitable feedback is critical in facilitating behavioural change and skills acquisition, as it helps individuals focus on skills gaps and learn from experience. Providing a social environment that is supportive and encouraging, positive change is more likely to be observed. Guided by such behavioural principles, employment programmes can target specific job search activities that increase the likelihood of obtaining employment.

Theory of planned behaviour:

This theory places attitudes and intention to perform an activity as the most proximal predictor of performance. Attitudes toward employment are reflected by an individual's cognitive or affective evaluation of the value of putting effort into finding work. For example, one individual may think it is useless to submit a CV online, whereas another might believe it is quite beneficial and efficient to find a job this way. Focusing on and addressing attitudes and intention when designing employment programmes can help overcome potential cognitive barriers to finding employment.

Social cognitive theory:

The theory explains human functioning in terms of the interaction amongst thought, behaviour, and the environment. It places emphasis on goal setting, outcome expectancy, and self-efficacy as key mechanisms of human agency. Self-efficacy refers to people's confidence in their ability to perform specific activities, it influences how people think, feel, and act. Higher self-efficacy can lead individuals to set higher goals and become more committed, subsequently motivating them and helping them overcome setbacks. Thus boosting self-efficacy should be an important element in employment programmes.

There are four sources of a person's beliefs about whether they can perform a given action or task:

- a) successfully performing the task in the past;
- b) vicariously learning from observing others successfully performing it;
- c) being persuaded or convinced that they can do it; and
- d) reducing the negative physiological state associated with fear of negative outcomes.

Accordingly, exploring employability through observing, modelling, and practicing effective behaviours and approaches might lead to increased self-efficacy. Boosting self-efficacy through verbal persuasion techniques should improve motivation and an active job search.

Coping theory :

This theory suggests that individuals facing demands that exceed their resources (or they perceive as such) will appraise the situation as potentially harmful or challenging and choose different coping strategies aimed at resolving the stressful situation. This process has significant implications to individual's overall well-being and employment. When redundancy or unemployment is perceived as a loss or threat, individuals' psychological well-being is likely to suffer, causing anxiety, depression, or physical symptoms. Individuals who experience lowered psychological well-being are more likely to focus on coping with the negative consequences, which can reduce motivation and persistence at tasks that can potentially resolve the problem. In addition, this might lead individuals to choose escape-oriented coping strategy including avoidance strategies focused on escaping or denying the situation, for example alcohol dependency, contributing to factors or thoughts that may prolong unemployment.

Programmes utilising coping theory, focus on developing control-oriented coping strategies that are proactive and aimed at resolving the situation. They aim to reduce maladaptive coping and manage stress, which can reduce the resources, both emotionally and in time, away from the task of finding and securing employment. Addressing sources of anxiety, whilst developing coping skills to reduce anxiety and enlisting social support may provide critical coping resources to assist from often devastating experiences of unemployment.

The approach used by COASTAL draws upon each of these theories which demonstrates the flexibility in the approach employed.

10.5 Existing research exploring the effectiveness of employment programmes

Operationalising theories of change, employment programmes seek to promote positive outcomes across protective factors, including self-efficacy. Understanding the impact of these programmes against outcomes is complex, particularly because there are a diverse range of programmes, each placing slightly different emphasis on particular outcomes, or the way in which they engage with individuals in different ways.

A recent systematic review⁴¹ and meta-analysis⁴² rigorously examined 47 experimental and quasi-experimental research studies⁴³ exploring employment programmes (Liu et al, 2014).⁴⁴ The meta-analysis found that the odds of obtaining employment were 2.67 times higher for individuals participating in employment programmes, compared to individuals that do not have access to such provision. Moderator analysis also suggested that employment programmes that contained certain components, including teaching job search skills, improving self-presentation, boosting self-efficacy, encouraging proactivity, promoting goal setting and enlisting social support, were more effective than interventions that did not include such components.

The analysis also found that programmes effectively promoted employment only when both skill development and motivation enhancement were included in provision. This supports the ‘package of support’ approach used by COASTAL.

⁴¹ A systematic review (also systematic literature review or structured literature review) is a literature review focused on a research question that tries to identify, appraise, select and synthesise all high quality research evidence relevant to that question.

⁴² Meta-analysis comprises methods for contrasting and combining results from different studies, in the hope of identifying patterns among study results, sources of disagreement among those results, or other interesting relationships that may come to light in the context of multiple studies.

⁴³ A ‘quasi-experiment’ is an empirical study used to estimate the causal impact of an intervention on its target population. Quasi-experimental research shares similarities with the traditional experimental design or randomised controlled trial, but they specifically lack the element of random assignment for treatment or control. Instead, quasi-experimental designs typically allow the researcher to control the assignment to the treatment condition, but using some criterion other than random assignment

⁴⁴ Liu S, Wang M and Huang J (2014) Effectiveness of Job Search Interventions: A Meta-Analytic Review in *Psychological Bulletin* 140: 4 pp 1009:1041

It was also found that programmes were more effective in helping younger and older people, short-term unemployed, and those with significant needs or conditions in finding work, compared to middle-aged, long-term unemployed. Furthermore, meta-analytic path analysis revealed that improvements in skills, self-efficacy and increased job search activity partially mediated the positive effect on obtaining employment.

The review highlighted some implications of the research for practice. The effectiveness of a programme was significantly mediated by the individual characteristics of participants entering the programme. Long-term unemployed people, for example, had significantly poorer outcomes across programmes, which suggests that general provision provided to all may not be suitable to that client group, again supporting the need for projects such as COASTAL. Therefore identifying such groups early and providing modified or tailored support may be required to make programmes more effective in the longer term.

Interpreting these findings and how they may be applied to COASTAL could isolate potential areas for improving provision. The review highlighted, for example, the importance of family and informal support networks in mediating successful outcomes. Supporting families or those that assist individuals accessing COASTAL, either directly or by referring them to relevant services, could strengthen the support networks around individuals. Strengthening provision that systematically and coherently provides motivational enhancement alongside skills development could also help ensure that the essential components are delivered to all.

10.6 Conclusion

This brief literature review explores the range of research that seeks to explain the processes and outcomes that support people into employment. Research clearly identifies the barriers people face in finding employment, especially those with health problems. It makes the case for supporting people on ethical, social and clinical grounds. Research has also identified a range of factors that support people into employment, including self-efficacy and outlines how those factors can be built up through intervention and support. In exploring how these elements come together, effectiveness research has identified how different programme components can support different client groups.

Broadly, we can conclude that the COASTAL model reflects and incorporates the latest thinking and research on supporting people into employment. Either explicitly or implicitly, the project seeks to promote and develop protective factors that have been identified as important pre-requisites for successful transitions into employment. With such a diverse client base, the challenge is ensuring that all clients receive systematic and coherent support that simultaneously builds the combination of factors, including self-efficacy and addressing health related barriers to employment.

11 Policy and strategy review

Policy and strategy context within which any project is being delivered is clearly important. From an evaluation perspective, the policy and strategy context is an important part of the assessment of whether or not the rationale for a project has changed over its lifetime. This section therefore reviews the policy and strategy developments that have occurred over the lifetime of the COASTAL project.

Key points

- There have been significant strategic and policy changes both at the national and regional level that have a direct impact on individuals accessing COASTAL project services.
- Understanding the implications of reforms for individuals and communities within the COASTAL region is complex.
- The increased emphasis on conditionality and employment incentives within welfare entitlement reform, however, increases the importance of programmes that support those furthest from the labour market – those most likely to be effected by reforms – such as COASTAL.

11.1 Welfare Reform and the Work Programme

A key influence on the delivery of the COASTAL programme has been the rapid evolution of welfare policy reform brought about by the UK coalition government since 2010. The wider impact of welfare reform is discussed below, followed by a focus on Employment and Support Allowance (ESA) and the Work Programme.

11.1.1 The Impact of Welfare Reform in Wales

The Welfare Reform Act 2012 sought to introduce significant changes to the way welfare benefits are regulated and administered across the UK. The Act sought to simplify and rationalise welfare systems, whilst significantly reducing overall expenditure through cuts in benefits and tax credits. To those ends, the Government introduced Universal Credit, bringing together a range of working age benefits into a capped single payment. A number of incapacity benefits were also replaced with the ESA.

The reforms have had a substantial impact on those accessing welfare benefits. It has capped the overall support individuals and families are entitled to, whilst increasing the restrictions, responsibilities and conditionality they face across provision. Many have seen their benefits cut, or removed all together. This has implications for the quality of life and the living standards of both individuals and households, especially low-income families who are dependent on benefits and tax credits. There has also been a geographical impact as Hamnett (2010) explains:

“with some of the greatest effects being felt in the poorest and most deprived areas of Britain, where economic activity levels are lowest and unemployment and the proportion of the population who are dependent on Social Security benefits is highest.”⁴⁵

The Welsh Government and leading welfare groups are concerned about the impact these reforms will have in Wales, particularly on the most vulnerable groups and individuals,⁴⁶ The Welsh Government’s *Ministerial Task and Finish Group for Welfare Reform* commissioned a programme of research to assess the impact of the UK Government’s welfare reforms in Wales.

The most recent findings from the research suggest that⁴⁷:

- Reforms are estimated to reduce annual benefit and tax credit entitlements in Wales by around £900 million by 2015/16.
- Around half of this reduction is due to the way benefits and tax credits are updated. Other large financial losses arise from a reduced caseload under Personal Independence Payment (PIP) compared to Disability Living Allowance (DLA) and the time-limiting of ESA entitlement to one year for those in the work-related activity group.
- Although reductions vary widely depending on individual circumstances, the average annual loss per working-age adult in Wales is estimated to be around £500 in 2015/16.
- Reductions in tax credits and benefits are regressive and disproportionate, with women and young people most likely to experience the greatest reductions in entitlements. Pensioners have not seen their entitlements reduced.
- The impact of welfare reform also varies geographically and across local authority areas, with average financial losses linked to community characteristics.
- For those individuals, families and communities whose income is affected by the welfare reforms, there may be subsequent changes in spending and wider knock on effects for the economy.
- The overall impact of the reforms introduced since April 2010 is to increase the level of income poverty in every year from 2010–2020, and to increase the rate at which poverty increases over time.

⁴⁵ Hamnett C. (2010) *The Re-shaping of the British Welfare System and its Implications for Geography and Geographers* Progress in Human Geography Sage: London.

⁴⁶ <http://wales.gov.uk/newsroom/educationandskills/2012/120319welfareforms/?lang=en>

⁴⁷ <http://wales.gov.uk/topics/people-and-communities/welfare-reform-in-wales/analysingreforms/?lang=en>

11.1.2 The introduction of Employment and Support Allowance (ESA)

Significant changes have been made to the way welfare support is provided to individuals unable to work on health grounds. In October 2008, pre-existing benefits paid on grounds of incapacity and disability (Incapacity Benefit (IB), Severe Disablement Allowance (SDA) and Income Support (IS)) were replaced with the ESA. The ESA is more aligned with Jobseeker's Allowance (JSA), and paying at a pre-assessment rate equal to JSA. ESA places greater emphasis on assessment of an individual's functional capabilities, and provides support and encouragement to move claimants with health conditions towards employment.

There are two types of ESA. Income-based ESA is a means-tested benefit that is available to people who are deemed unable to work but who do not have sufficient NI contributions. Claimants must have household savings of under £16,000 and their partner cannot be in employment for more than 24 hours per week. Contributions-based ESA is a non-means-tested benefit that is payable to people who are deemed unable to work and who have made sufficient NI contributions. Since May 2012, the Welfare Reform Act 2012 introduced a time limit to contributory ESA of 12 months for those in the WRAG.

A key element of administering the ESA is the Work Capability Assessment Process (CAP) which is used to assess claimant's capability for work and eligibility of benefit. A contractor, ATOS Healthcare, carries out any face-to-face assessments. They then make a recommendation for each claimant to the DWP, who in turn makes the final decision. A claimant can have three possible outcomes:

- Individuals can be found fit for work;
- Individuals can be found to have limited capability for work;
- Individuals can be found to have limited capability for work and in addition, limited capability for work related activity.

The CAP has proved to be controversial and has received considerable criticism from a range of factors, including the judiciary and the medical profession. The assessment has been condemned by doctors for their repetitive and impersonal style, while the reports they produce have been criticised for their overall quality and the accuracy of their recommendations – which whistle blowers have alleged are biased against the claimant.⁴⁸ A landmark decision by judicial review in 2013 found that the CAP's were not fit for purpose, and that they substantially disadvantage people with mental health conditions.⁴⁹

To date, almost all claimants have been reassessed and assigned to the ESA. DWP figures suggest that across the COASTAL region, only 9,790 remain on IB or other severe disability entitlements, this represents an 83.1% drop since 2009, not all claimants have been reassigned to ESA however. Together, individuals accessing either IB and ESA entitlements has dropped 14.2% over the same period, suggesting that 9,020 people across the region have moved into employment or had their entitlements removed.

⁴⁸http://www.huffingtonpost.co.uk/2013/03/16/atos-michael-meacher-dwp-fit-to-work-tests-slammed_n_2889748.html

⁴⁹<http://www.theguardian.com/society/2013/may/22/fitness-work-tests-mental-health-unfair>

Table 11.1: Number of claimants of IB and severe disablement entitlements, 2008 to 2014

	Feb-09	Feb-10	Feb-11	Feb-12	Feb-13	Feb-14	% Change 2008-14
Bridgend	9,690	8,590	7,550	6,120	3,390	1,520	-84.3
Carmarthenshire	11,910	10,550	9,500	7,830	4,440	2,190	-81.6
Ceredigion	3,410	3,020	2,730	2,180	1,240	530	-84.5
Neath Port Talbot	11,900	10,620	9,690	8,050	4,580	2,090	-82.4
Pembrokeshire	6,020	5,260	4,710	3,860	2,190	890	-85.2
Swansea	14,850	13,080	11,890	9,720	5,450	2,570	-82.7
COASTAL REGION	57,780	51,120	46,070	37,760	21,290	9,790	-83.1
WALES	178,800	158,170	142,260	116,360	65,210	30,580	-82.9

Table 11.2: Number of claimants of ESA, 2008 to 2014

	Feb-09	Feb-10	Feb-11	Feb-12	Feb-13	Feb-14	% Change 2008-14
Bridgend	780	1,740	2,440	3,690	5,950	7,740	892.3
Carmarthenshire	780	2,050	2,420	3,710	6,050	8,090	937.2
Ceredigion	210	570	720	1,210	1,900	2,460	1071.4
Neath Port Talbot	810	2,090	2,770	3,980	6,440	8,740	979.0
Pembrokeshire	390	1,060	1,420	2,090	3,510	4,480	1048.7
Swansea	1,130	2,810	3,660	5,440	8,900	11,560	923.0
COASTAL REGION	4,100	10,320	13,430	20,120	32,750	43,070	950.5
WALES	12,550	31,780	42,260	61,570	101,150	133,540	964.1

Table 11.3: Total number of claimants of IB and ESA, 2008 to 2014

	Feb-09	Feb-10	Feb-11	Feb-12	Feb-13	Feb-14	% Change 2008-14
Bridgend	10470	10330	9990	9810	9340	9260	-11.6
Carmarthenshire	12690	12600	11920	11540	10490	10280	-19.0
Ceredigion	3620	3590	3450	3390	3140	2990	-17.4
Neath Port Talbot	12710	12710	12460	12030	11020	10830	-14.8
Pembrokeshire	6410	6320	6130	5950	5700	5370	-16.2
Swansea	15980	15890	15550	15160	14350	14130	-11.6
COASTAL REGION	61880	61440	59500	57880	54040	52860	-14.6
WALES	191350	189950	184520	177930	166360	164120	-14.2

Source: DWP NOMIS Official Labour Market Statistics⁵⁰

⁵⁰ <https://www.nomisweb.co.uk/articles/843.aspx>

Projected impact of ESA reforms to 2015/16

Future projections of the impact of the introduction of ESA into 2015/16 suggest there will be significant losses of income for individuals and communities across Wales. According to a recent report published by the Welsh Government, the impact will be varied across the country. Neath Port Talbot, Blaenau Gwent and Bridgend are estimated to be the hardest hit local authority areas in Wales. This reflects the fact that among all Welsh local authorities, they have the highest proportions of the working-age population claiming ESA. The local authority areas that are the worst affected by this reform are also the hardest hit by loss of entitlement to DLA. This is because nearly two thirds of claimants receiving DLA as their main benefit are also in receipt of IB/ESA.

Across the COASTAL region, significant variation is predicted in terms of the cumulative loss of income. Neath Port Talbot is the hardest hit, with an estimated loss of £111 per working age adult per year, which equates to £10 million reduction in spending power for the local economy. A total loss of £44million is being projected across the COASTAL region.

Table 11.4: Projected income loss of ESA reforms to 2015/16

	Income loss per working-age adult: £ per year	Number of claimants affected (Proportion of working age population)	Income loss per year: £m
Bridgend	100	3,700 (4%)	9
Carmarthenshire	72	3,400 (3%)	8
Ceredigion	51	1,000 (2%)	2
Neath Port Talbot	111	4,200 (5%)	10
Pembrokeshire	65	2,000 (3%)	5
Swansea	65	4,300 (3%)	10
COASTAL region	73	18,500 (3%)	44
Wales	68	56,000 (3%)	132

Source: Welsh Government

11.1.3 The Work Programme

Alongside welfare benefits and tax credits, the UK Government has sought to reform the support people receive in accessing the labour market. The introduction of the Work Programme in 2011 sought to encourage long-term investment and innovation in seeking to help more people into sustainable work opportunities. It replaced previous programmes such as New Deals, Employment Zones and Flexible New Deal and introduced commissioning of services by means of payment-by-results.

Provision under the Work Programme aims to offer individualised support underpinned by an element of benefit compulsion where people not undertaking required activity can be subject to benefit sanctions and possible mandatory activity. People coming out of their Work Programme without a job may be put onto Mandatory Community Activity and could cycle between the two if they do not gain employment.

The programme is delivered by specialist public, private and voluntary sector providers designing flexible support based on customer need, and these providers will be rewarded for keeping people in work and for assisting harder to help customers. These rewards are in the form of three fee payments, an attachment fee when an individual starts the programme, a job outcome fee and a sustainment fee for sustained employment.

The DWP has appointed *Working Links* and *Rehab Jobfit* to deliver the programme in Wales. As ‘prime providers’ (with contracts lasting for seven years) they are expected to work with a range of sub-contractors to deliver the personalised and localised services enshrined in the programme, although in their original bids to be prime contractors Working Links proposed to sub-contract 5.3% of their total contract value to the voluntary sector, whilst Rehab Jobfit proposed 13% voluntary sector sub-contracting.

A recent audit of the Work Programme by the National Audit Office concluded that after a poor start, the Work Programme was beginning to deliver comparable outcomes to other welfare-to-work programmes.⁵¹ Although deemed as effective as other programmes, results were lower than initially forecast. Issues also remained concerning the cherry picking by providers of clients closest to the labour market. This resulted in significantly poor performance of the Work Programme in supporting people with significant barriers to employment.

ESF support and the Work Programme

ESF support (such as that provided by COASTAL) cannot be used for people eligible for mandatory entry to the Work Programme as it would substitute expenditure, which the member state would make from its own resources.⁵² WEFO guidance states that the following groups are eligible for ESF support:

- Jobseekers Allowance (JSA) and Employment Support Allowance claimants with mandatory access to the Work Programme *prior* to any referral onto the Work Programme (however, ESF projects must be confident that they can achieve an outcome with these individuals before the point of referral);
- JSA/ ESA claimants with voluntary access to the Work Programme who are not accessing it;

⁵¹ <http://www.nao.org.uk/report/the-work-programme/>

⁵² It should be noted that the UK Government disagrees with this approach. In a response to Welsh Affairs committee investigation to the Work Programme, the UK Government warns that Welsh participants are at a “disadvantage” and “Whilst Work Programme providers have the freedom to address any barrier to work, the department also expects providers to take advantage of national and local support funded via other routes, in the interests of getting participants into sustained work... This freedom to join up provision to meet the needs of individual participants and local labour markets is a core feature of the programme and essential to getting people the help they need. In England, Work Programme participants are able to access pre-employment skills support funded by the Skills Funding Agency, and whilst it is within the Welsh Government’s gift to set their own rules about their pre-employment provision and provision funded by the ESF in Wales, we would argue that the Welsh Government’s decisions have left participants in Wales at a disadvantage compared to those in England.” The UK Government is “asking the Welsh Government to review this decision to enable Work Programme participants to be able to access skills provision funded through the Welsh Government”. Source: <http://www.walesonline.co.uk/news/wales-news/jobseekers-wales-disadvantage-because-welsh-6679210>

- Income Support recipients (e.g. single parents of children aged under seven and other carers);
- Incapacity Benefit (IB) recipients;
- People out of work who are not claiming benefits;
- People being made redundant;
- 16-17 year olds (unless they are claiming JSA and on the Work Programme);
- People in receipt of state pension;
- Unemployed or economically inactive people in receipt of carers allowance (if not claiming Jobseekers Allowance (JSA) or Employment Support Allowance (ESA)).

When considering how COASTAL needed to be reconfigured to take the above into account, the project management team worked along the following principles:

- a) All of the current project activity will remain eligible activity. It is only the participants' status, which might cause the individual to become ineligible for support.
- b) The large majority of the COASTAL participant target group have always been long-term IB / IS claimants, all of whom will remain eligible, up to the point of migration to ESA / JSA and for the period prior to them reaching the relevant point of referral to the Work Programme.
- c) That specific employment related activity which might directly duplicate Work Programme provision (e.g. work placement, job-search, employer liaison etc.) whilst still appropriate for eligible participants, will inevitably form a much smaller proportion of the project's activity.

COASTAL continued to work with all participants, up to the point at which they were referred to the Work Programme as follows:

Participant group	Eligibility
Incapacity Benefit / Income Support participants	No restriction <i>until</i> such time as they have been re-assessed and migrated to either ESA or JSA, following which, the relevant criteria below would apply
JSA participants	To the point at which they become eligible for mandatory referral and are referred to the Work Programme by Job Centre Plus (JCP), or, if referral further deferred by JCP, the point at which such deferral expires
ESA Work Related Activity Group participants	To the point at which they are assessed as appropriate for Work Programme support and referred by JCP advisor. This would normally be the point at which their projected 'work prognosis' expires and Work Programme provision becomes mandatory. Alternatively, if referral is further deferred by JCP, the point at which such deferral expires
ESA Support Group participants	To the point at which they volunteer for and are assessed as appropriate for Work Programme support and referred by JCP advisor
Participants not in receipt of any relevant benefit	No restriction

Source: COASTAL regional team

In light of the above, the feedback was generally that the actual impact of the introduction of the Work Programme on COASTAL was limited; the participant group supported by COASTAL has only changed slightly. However, more recent feedback is that the impact has been more significant as a number of participants that COASTAL could potentially work with (and who are requesting support) cannot be supported as they are already registered with the Work Programme and therefore ineligible.

Further, the introduction of the Work Programme has limited the number of participants who are closer to the labour market that the COASTAL project could work with. Potentially, this seriously undermined the project's potential to target participants that can help the project achieve its employment outcomes.

Policy in Wales

COASTAL provides support to individuals who are currently economically inactive or unemployed as a result of illness, disability, substance misuse problems and/or the serious social disadvantage associated with the transition from long-term care into adulthood. As such, it crosses a number of policy areas, and the majority of these have seen substantial changes since the beginning of COASTAL. Those key policies and strategies, including those under development at the time of this report, which have changed in this period will now be summarised by broad type:

- Skills and Employment
- Poverty and Deprivation
- Community
- Economic Development
- Equality and Diversity
- Social Care

11.1.4 Skills and Employment

Policy and practice concerning the State's involvement in promoting skills development and employability across Wales is influenced by a range of factors, including the Welsh Government, central government departments, and individual local authorities. This creates a complex and diverse picture, with significant local variation that impacts on the types of provision offered to members of the community and their overall experience of support.

Key Government Strategies and Programmes in Wales

In 2014, the Welsh Government set out its vision for supporting skills development and employment over the coming decade.⁵³ The *Skills Implementation Plan* outlined the key policy actions which they intend will shape responses to the challenge of developing resilient and flexible systems that effectively support individuals and employers. The plan set out to:

- Integrate Skills Performance Measures across policies and programmes in driving-up skills levels across the workforce.
- Invest in skills alongside employers and support employer networks and collaborations through the introduction of a Flexible Skills Programme.
- Deliver an integrated employment and skills programme using the brokerage function of a new Skills Gateway.
- Build on the regional structures in place across Wales to develop the long-term infrastructure required to support a model for regional skills delivery.
- Improve the quality and impact of skills provision locally with the introduction of our Skills Priorities Programme, working with the further education sector to continue to ensure that it is responsive to employer need.
- Establish Sector Qualification Advisory Panels to support the development of vocational qualifications relevant to Wales, supported by the future function of Qualifications Wales.
- Work with employers to pilot skills utilisation agreements to ensure skills are effectively deployed by employers and to tackle levels of over-qualification.
- Implement a policy for co-investment in Wales which balances the responsibilities for skills investment between government, employers and individuals.

In supporting individuals to upskill and find employment, the implementation plan also set out to:

- Simplify arrangements for accessing skills and employment support through the introduction of a Skills Gateway.
- Provide employment support arrangements that add value to those available via the DWP, including continuation of our flagship programmes Jobs Growth Wales and ReAct.
- Expand the provision of essential skills support through the introduction of a new adult employability programme, underpinned by a standardised assessment tool for identifying literacy and numeracy needs.

⁵³<http://wales.gov.uk/topics/educationandskills/skillsandtraining/policy-statement-on-skills/skills-implementation-plan/?lang=en>

Youth Engagement and Employment Action Plan

Published in 2009, *The Youth Engagement and Employment Action Plan 2011-15* outlined the Welsh Government's approach to supporting young people into education and employment.⁵⁴ Developed as part of the Government's "Skills That Work for Wales" strategy, the overall aim was to reduce the number of young people who are, or are at risk of becoming, not in education, employment or training (NEET) in Wales.

In early 2013, the Welsh Government announced there would be a transition from Youth Engagement and Employment Action Plan to a Framework for Youth Engagement and Progression, developed on the basis of the good practice identified by local authorities. Actions from the Youth Engagement and Employment Action Plan have been identified and incorporated within one or more strands of the new framework to enable continued ongoing activity to drive the good practice that has been delivered to date.

Youth Engagement and Progression Framework and Implementation Plan

The new Youth Engagement and Progression Framework has sought to deliver better outcomes for young people. The approach aims to increase engagement and progression, and the plan gives local authorities a key strategic leadership role in developing their own response. The foundations of the approach are based on six key principles that seek to increase youth engagement and progression:

- Identifying young people most at risk of disengagement;
- Better brokerage and co-ordination of support for them;
- Stronger tracking and transition of young people through the system;
- Ensuring provision meets the needs of young people;
- Strengthening employability skills and opportunities for employment;
- And finally - greater accountability for local authorities.

In a statement about Youth Engagement and Progression, Leighton Andrews, former Minister for Children, Education and Lifelong Learning, stated:

"My ambition is for there to be a lead worker in every local authority with responsibility for providing a personal and immediate response to those young people identified as being at risk of disengagement, acting as a broker for them to ensure the delivery of the right level of support to help them make progress." (23rd April 2013)

Recent figures suggest there has been a small reduction in the overall number of young people identified as NEET. In July 2014, 20.2 per cent of 19-24 year olds were estimated to be NEET according to the Office of National Statistics, drawing on data from the Annual Population Survey.⁵⁵ This represents a reduction from 22.9 per cent (a total of 59,600 young people) from the end 2012.

⁵⁴ <http://wales.gov.uk/topics/educationandskills/publications/guidance/yeeap/?lang=en>

⁵⁵ <http://wales.gov.uk/statistics-and-research/young-people-not-education-employment-training/?lang=en>

11.1.5 Poverty

Tackling Poverty Action Plan 2012-2016

The Welsh Government launched the 'Tackling Poverty Action Plan' in June 2012. The plan is based on three broad action points:

- **To prevent poverty**, especially through investment in giving children the best possible start in life. From conception through to early adulthood, our aim will be to reduce inequality at the earliest possible stage and break the link between socio-economic disadvantage, educational under achievement and the impaired life chances that flow from these;
- Recognising that the best route out of poverty is through employment, we will continue to **help people to improve their skills and enhance the relevance of their qualifications**. We will also remove other barriers to employment – from practical barriers such as the accessibility of transport and buildings to less tangible barriers such as poverty of aspiration - helping people to move on to and up the employment ladder;
- At the same time, we will increase action to **mitigate the impact of poverty** here and now. We recognise that for more and more people, even being in work will not guarantee that they can escape poverty. We can act to improve the quality of life of these communities, families and individuals.

The second action point is closely aligned with the COASTAL remit. The plan sits alongside the Child Poverty Strategy, introduced below.

Child Poverty Strategy

A new Child Poverty Strategy for Wales was adopted in early 2011 and sets out Welsh Government's vision and strategic objectives for reducing child poverty.⁵⁶ The Government aspires to the eradication of child poverty by 2020. The three new strategic objectives for tackling child poverty are to:

- Reduce the number of families living in workless households;
- Improve the skills of parents and young people living in low income households so they can secure well-paid employment; and
- Reduce inequalities that exist in health, education and economic outcomes of children and families by improving the outcomes of the poorest.

⁵⁶ <http://wales.gov.uk/docs/dsjlg/policy/110203newchildpovstrategy2en.pdf>

Why is this relevant to COASTAL? There is extensive literature on the links between unemployment, the incidence and continued experience of child poverty, and the opportunity that tackling worklessness can have upon reducing child poverty levels. Platt (2010)⁵⁷ shows that the potential transmission of all forms of economic disadvantage between generations and the long-term impacts of this disadvantage increase significantly for children living in workless households.

The literature further shows that children living in workless households face higher risks of living in future poverty, as well as facing significant challenges to their own personal, social and health development, as well as greater potential impacts on overall child welfare.⁵⁸ For those who live longer in poverty, the risks and impacts tend to be more pronounced than for those children who may live in short-term or transient poverty such that by early intervention some longer-term impacts of poverty may be mitigated.^{59 60} As such, COASTAL has the potential to contribute to the ambitious Welsh Government child poverty targets.

Despite attempts to reduce child poverty, key statistics suggest that income poverty and work and worklessness indicators mostly got worse from 2005 to 2012, using data available to February 2014.⁶¹ Child poverty in Wales is now higher than it was in 2005, driven in part by a steep rise in the proportion of children in working families who are in poverty. Most of the other indicators of work and worklessness also worsened between 2005 and 2013, except the lone parent employment rate which remained unchanged. Indicators of skills and qualifications and housing indicators show a mixed picture of improvement, while health indicators have mostly remained unchanged since 2005.

The table overleaf shows changes in the child poverty rate and the proportion of children in workless households relative to their level in 2005, where they are set to 100%. Lines are shown for Wales and Great Britain (GB).

While the Welsh Government controls many of the levers it needs to tackle child poverty effectively at a local level, it lacks control over key aspects of macro-economic policy which are likely to influence child poverty rates. These include welfare policy, monetary policy and fiscal policy.

⁵⁷ Platt, L. (2010) 'Ten year transitions in children's experience of living in a workless household: variations by ethnic group' in Population Trends 139, Spring 2010, ONS. Available at: <http://www.statistics.gov.uk/populationtrends/downloads/PopTrends06.pdf>

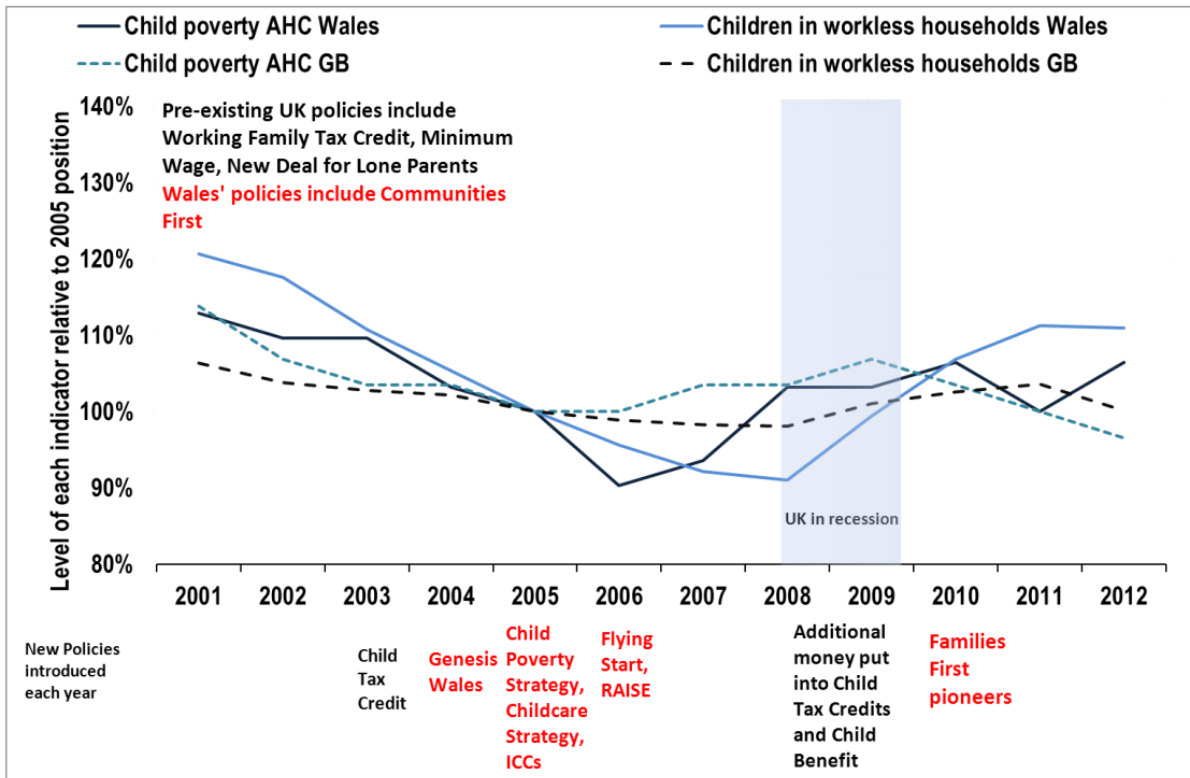
⁵⁸ Bradbury, B, Jenkins, S P and Micklewright, J (eds) (2001) The Dynamics of Child Poverty in Industrialised Countries, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press

⁵⁹ Vleminckx, K and Smeeding, T M (eds) 2001 Child Well-Being, Child Poverty and Child Policy in Modern Nations: What do we know? Bristol: The Policy Press.

⁶⁰ Schoon, I, Sacker, A and Bartley, M (2003) 'Socio-economic adversity and psychosocial adjustment: a developmental contextual perspective', Social Science and Medicine 57: 1001– 1015.

⁶¹ <http://wales.gov.uk/statistics-and-research/child-poverty-strategy/?lang=en>

Figure 11.2: Trends in child poverty, children in workless households and working age unemployment, with key policy developments highlighted



Source: DWP Households Below Average Income and ONS Workless Households Statistics c/o Evaluation of the Welsh Child Poverty Strategy, Final Report – Ipsos MORI and the New Policy Institute for the Welsh Government (2014)

Families First

Families First emerged in 2012 and promotes the development by local authority areas of effective multi-agency systems and support, with a clear emphasis on prevention and early intervention for families, particularly those living in poverty.⁶² From April 2012, all local authorities were expected to develop and implement: a Joint Assessment Family Framework (JAFF); a Team Around the Family (TAF) model; a coherent set of strategically commissioned, time limited, family-focused services or projects; an inter-authority Families First learning set; and proposals to improve support for families with disabled children and young people.

⁶² <http://wales.gov.uk/topics/childrenyoungpeople/parenting/help/familiesfirst/?lang=en>

Services need to be organised so that the support provided is:

- Family-focused, taking a whole family approach to improving outcomes;
- Bespoke, tailoring help to individual family circumstances;
- Integrated, with effective co-ordination of planning and service provision across organisations, ensuring that needs assessment and delivery are jointly managed and that there is a seamless progression for families;
- Between different interventions and programmes;
- Pro-active, seeking early identification and appropriate intervention for families;
- Intensive, with a vigorous approach and relentless focus, adapting to families' changing circumstances; and
- Local, identifying the needs of local communities and developing appropriate service delivery to fit those needs, with particular regard for the opportunities to link with, for example, the Flying Start and Communities First programmes.

Families First aims to achieve outcomes in relation to tackling child poverty. As a result, four national programme outcomes have been identified:

- Working age people in low income families gain, and progress within employment;
- Children, young people and families, in or at risk of poverty, achieve their potential;
- Children, young people and families are healthy, safe and enjoy well-being; and
- Families are confident, nurturing, and resilient.

Every local authority has developed a Families First Action Plan (2012-17). The plans will be delivered at the local level with partner organisations under the guidance of Families First Delivery Groups. The Families First team at the Welsh Government will work closely with each local authority throughout the five-year programme.

Research conducted by the Welsh Government suggested that it is too early in the programme to determine the impact of Families First.⁶³ This is hampered by the fact that there is an apparent paucity of baseline data or a robust comparison group to be able to accurately determine outcomes. The evaluation does, however, highlight some early benefits from the programme: The JAFF helps to engage families more effectively and improve the effectiveness of agencies' work. TAF panels are seen as more responsive compared with prior arrangements for assessing family needs. Better multi-agency working means more effective support for families with multiple needs as well as better use of local resources.

⁶³ <http://wales.gov.uk/statistics-and-research/child-poverty-strategy/?lang=en>

11.1.6 Community

Getting On Together - a Community Cohesion Strategy for Wales

Getting on Together was launched in December 2009 and sets out Welsh Government's priorities for improving community cohesion at a local level. The purpose of the strategy is to support service providers such as local authorities and their partners to develop a strategic approach to promoting and maintaining cohesion in their local areas.

The strategy focuses on those policy and service delivery areas that research has shown can have a significant impact on how well a community gets on together:

- Housing;
- Learning;
- Communication;
- Promoting Equality and Social Inclusion; and
- Preventing Violent Extremism and Strengthening Community Cohesion.

Points 2 and 4 (Learning and Promoting Equality and Social Inclusion) directly relate to COASTAL aims and play a key part in helping to drive cohesion.

11.1.7 Economic Development

Economic Renewal: A New Direction

Economic Renewal: A New Direction was published in 2011 and sets out the role Welsh Government can play in providing the best conditions and framework to enable the private sector to grow and flourish. In future, government resources will be targeted at tackling wide systematic issues within the Welsh economy - investing in infrastructure, skills and improving the conditions within which businesses operate.⁶⁴

Economic renewal will see a fundamental shift away from direct and generic support for companies to a focus on creating the right environment for businesses to succeed. The strategy is based on five priorities including one closely related to COASTAL:

“Broadening and deepening the skills base: The foundation of any economy is its working population and education and skills at all levels are vital for economic growth and prosperity in Wales. Delivering this is a shared responsibility for us as a Government and as learning providers, employers and individuals”.

⁶⁴<http://wales.gov.uk/topics/businessandconomy/economicrenewal/programmepapers/anewdirection/?lang=en>

11.1.8 Equality and Diversity

Strategic Equality Plan

The Welsh Government was the first part of UK to regulate specific duties under the 2010 Equality Act. Public sector bodies in Wales, including the Welsh Government have a statutory duty to publish Equality Objectives by 2nd April 2012 and to have developed a Strategic Equality Plan as soon as possible thereafter. WG published their plan in 2012.⁶⁵ The plan aims to work toward a series of equality objectives:

1. Strengthen advice, information and advocacy services to help people with protected characteristics understand and exercise their rights and make informed choices.
2. Work with partners to identify and address the causes of the gender, ethnicity and disability pay and employment differences.
3. Reduce the numbers of young people not in education, employment or training (NEET).
4. Reduce the incidence of all forms of violence against women, domestic abuse, 'honour' based violence, hate crime, bullying and elder abuse.
5. Tackle barriers and support disabled people so that they can live independently and exercise choice and control in their daily lives.
6. Put the needs of service users at the heart of delivery in key public services, in particular health, housing and social services, so that they are responsive to the needs of people with protected characteristics.
7. Improve the engagement and participation of under-represented groups in public appointments.
8. Create a more inclusive workplace that promotes equality of opportunity for staff with protected characteristics through improved employee engagement and increase awareness of learning and development opportunities that are accessible to all staff.

The objectives are relevant to both COASTAL's programme of work, and the way in which they are required to work.

⁶⁵ <http://wales.gov.uk/docs/caecd/publications/120405sepfinal.pdf>

11.1.9 Social Care

Fulfilled Lives, Supportive Communities

'Fulfilled Lives, Supportive Communities' is Welsh Government's strategy for improving social services in Wales from 2008 – 2018. The key aim is to ensure social services demonstrate year on year improvement and ensure that services are:

- *Strong, accessible and accountable;*
- *Focused on citizen, family and community needs;*
- *Focused on social inclusion and the rights of individuals;*
- *Concerned with good outcomes;*
- *Delivered in a joined up, flexible and efficient way to consistently high standards and in partnership with service users.*

The Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014

Representing ground-breaking legislation and a significant departure from UK policy in the administration and provision of social services, the Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act became law on 1st May 2014. The Bill provides the legal framework for improving the well-being of people who need care and support, and those that care for them.

The Act seeks to bring about the transformation of social service delivery in Wales, promoting people's independence to give them a stronger voice and control. Integration and simplification of the law will also provide greater consistency and clarity to:

- People who use social services,;
- Their carers;
- Local authority staff and their partner organisations; and
- The courts and the judiciary.

The Act promotes equality, improves the quality of services and enhances access to the provision of information people receive, it will also encourage a renewed focus on prevention and early intervention.⁶⁶ The Act places a number of responsibilities upon local authorities, including:

- Assessing the extent of need and provision of care services, and identify gaps in provision;
- Assist in the development of social enterprises / co-ops / third sector organisations to provide care and support and preventative services; and
- Ensure service users are involved in the design and running of care, support and preventative services.

⁶⁶ <http://www.senedd.assembly.wales/mglIssueHistoryHome.aspx?lId=5664>

COASTAL provided an opportunity for local authorities to demonstrate they are working towards meeting obligations under the Act. The nature of COASTAL provision, which seeks to respond to individual client needs around employment, sits within the overall objective of the Act to assess service needs and address gaps in provision. The focus of COASTAL on social enterprise development as a means of ensuring long-term sustainability of provision also directly addresses the objective of the Act. These reforms underline the need and appropriateness of projects such as COASTAL.

11.2 Conclusion

Since COASTAL project's inception, there have been significant changes to the way social services are legislated, co-ordinated and delivered across provision that supports people into employment. The introduction of Universal Credit and ESA, for example, has significantly redrawn welfare entitlements, conditionalities and incentives, placing greater emphasis on encouraging people off benefits and into paid work. Finding effective solutions that support people in making successful and sustainable transitions into employment is therefore central to ensuring that those furthest from the labour market are not left behind.

Recent welfare reforms are designed to change patterns of behaviour of those accessing benefits – specifically towards finding employment. They may therefore influence the behaviour and engagement of individuals accessing COASTAL services, but not always in ways that were expected or intended. Welfare conditionality can have a stigmatising effect on some individuals, pushing them to the margins and further away from the labour market.⁶⁷ For others, conditionality can influence changes in behaviours towards seeking employment, increasing levels of motivation and engagement. Precisely how people will respond to these reforms, and the subsequent impact on COASTAL services and outcomes, is difficult to anticipate or measure with any sort of precision.

COASTAL operates within the context of a diverse range of programmes and initiatives with overlapping aims. There have been significant changes to existing programmes, or those brought about by new legislation, that could also impact on COASTAL both positively and negatively.

⁶⁷ <http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC3134518/>

12 The economic context within which the project has operated

The economic conditions within which any employment related project has operated is obviously important, especially in terms of achieving employment outcomes. This chapter of the report therefore reviews the economic conditions prevalent during the delivery of the COASTAL project and considered how they may have impacted upon its delivery and what could be achieved.

Key points

- According to ONS data, unemployment rates have dropped significantly below pre-recession levels.
- There have been corresponding reductions in the numbers of people claiming benefits.
- Numbers of people in employment has risen gradually since lows in 2010.
- However, increases in the numbers of employed do not necessarily correlate with drops in unemployment or overall claimant counts.

12.1 Recession

Although the UK as a whole is now out of recession, it did play a significant role in shaping the economic climate in which COASTAL has had to respond. The collapse of Lehman Brothers bank in September 2008 incurred massive losses on financial institutions throughout the world. Significant government intervention was necessary to prevent the collapse of financial markets and banking sectors across the globe. This led to a significant economic contraction as a result of reductions in consumer confidence, a credit freeze and debt restructuring on an individual, organisational, and national level. In response to falling tax receipts, the UK Government sought to introduce austerity measures that addressed the budget deficit and lowered the risk of debt default.

These factors led to an economic downturn and subsequent recession of the scale not seen in the UK since the great depression of the 1930s. At the time of this report, economic growth in the UK and Wales was continuing to struggle although there were some signs of recovery.

12.2 Impact on the labour market in Wales and the COASTAL region

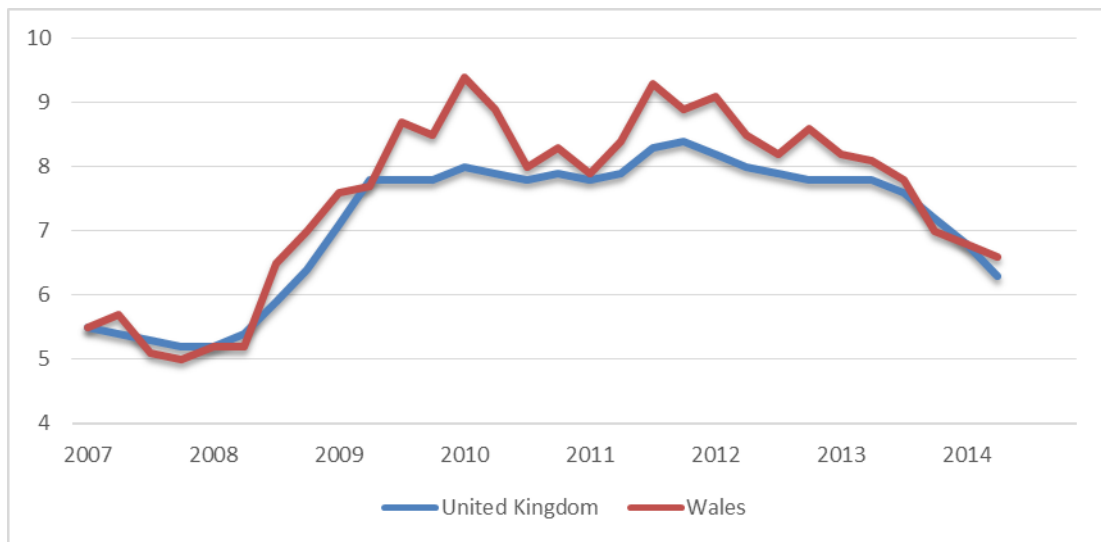
The most pertinent impact of the recession has been its impact on the labour market, specifically unemployment. There are two standard measures for unemployment used in official statistics in the UK: the ILO unemployment measure and the claimant count. These are continually updated by the Office of National Statistics (ONS) and the latest data for each of these is discussed below.

12.2.1 Unemployment and Employment Statistics

The International Labour Organisation (ILO) unemployment measure is a count of those who are out of work and want a job, have actively sought work in the last four weeks and are available to start work in the next two weeks; plus those who are out of work, have found a job and are waiting to start in the next two weeks. Unemployment rates (based on the ILO definition) are calculated in all EU countries leading to the calculation of EU harmonised unemployment rates. These rates are expressed as a percentage of the economically active population.

Figure 12.1 below illustrates the increase in the ILO unemployment rate in Wales since the beginning of 2007 and compares it to the UK average.

Figure 12.1: ILO Unemployment rate in Wales and the UK (% of pop. 16 and over, quarterly)



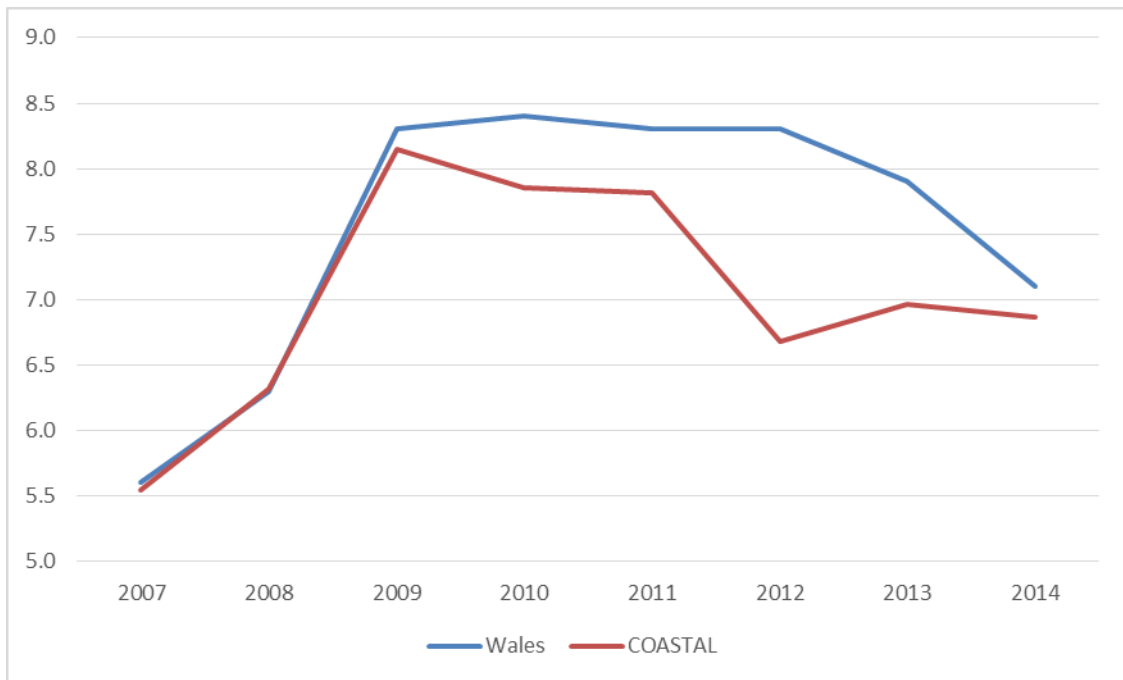
Source: StatsWales

For the first quarter of 2007, the ILO unemployment rate in Wales and the UK was 5.5%. Three years later, in the first quarter of 2010, the rate had risen to 9.4% in Wales and 8% in the UK. This represented a rise of 70% in the Welsh unemployment rate in just three years and pushed the unemployment rate in Wales above that in the UK as a whole.

Despite falling to 7.9% in Wales in the first quarter of 2011, almost in line with the UK average of 7.8%, unemployment rose again to 9.3% by the third quarter of the year. Since then, unemployment has continued to fall, and has more closely followed the national average. The last available data suggests that unemployment is 6.6% in Wales, compared to 6.3% across the UK.

In terms of the six local authorities over which COASTAL operates, annual (rather than quarterly) ILO unemployment rates are reported. Fig. 12.2, below, shows that the trends in unemployment in the COASTAL region broadly followed those for Wales as a whole until June 2009, since when Wales has seen a rise in unemployment, but the COASTAL regions has remained relatively steady around 8%, with a fall in the last recorded period. Unemployment within the COASTAL region was lower than Wales throughout 2010 until 2014, where that has started to converge at 6.9% and 7.1% respectively.

Figure 12.2: Annual ILO unemployment rate in Wales and COASTAL region (% of pop. 16 and over)



Source: Statswales

Reductions in unemployment rates do not necessarily translate into increased employment rates. According to the ONS, there were 1.363 million people in employment in Wales in June to August 2014. This is a rate of 68.8 per cent of those aged 16-64, down slightly from 70.0 per cent in the same period a year earlier.⁶⁸ This suggests that overall, falls in unemployment rates have not corresponded in increased employment rates over the same period. There have been corresponding increases in the number of self-employed people, which may account for some of the discrepancy. Across the UK, the ONS estimates that there has been an 83% increase in the numbers of self-employed amongst people over the age of 50.⁶⁹

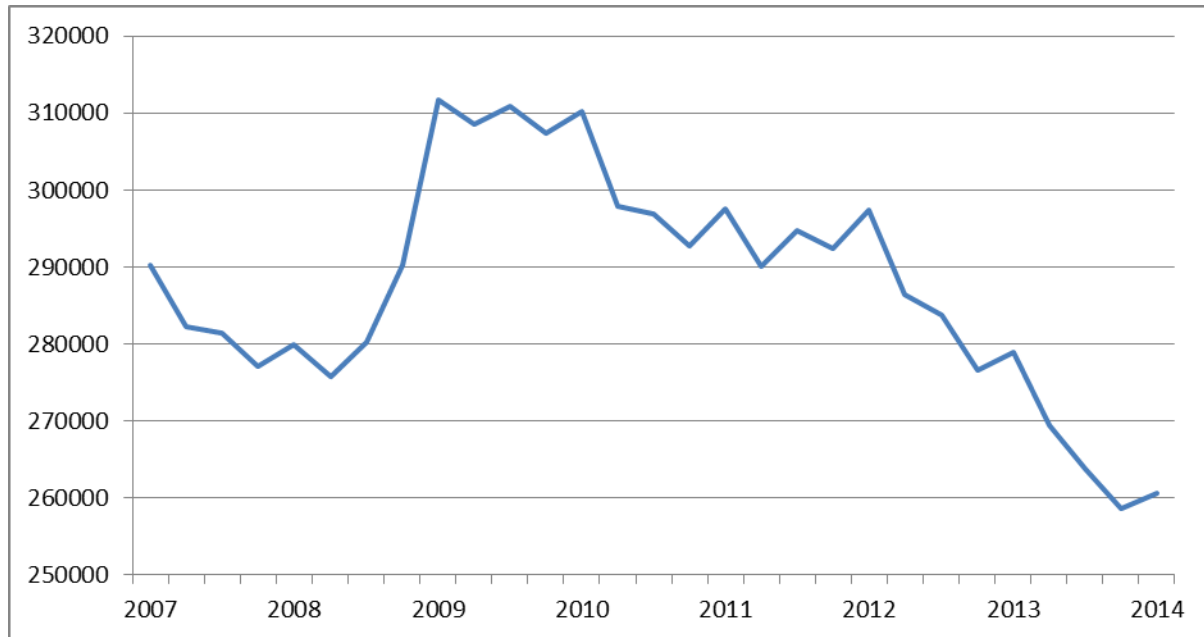
⁶⁸ <http://wales.gov.uk/statistics-and-research/key-economic-statistics/?lang=en>

⁶⁹ <http://www.ons.gov.uk/ons/rel/lmac/self-employed-workers-in-the-uk/february-2013/rpt-self-employed-workers.html>

12.2.2 Claimant count

The claimant count is a count of all persons claiming unemployment-related benefits, taken from Job Centre Plus administrative systems. As such, it is not subject to sampling variability and can be disaggregated to very high levels of detail. However, it excludes those who are unemployed who are not eligible to claim (for example those out of work but whose partner works), and those who do not wish to claim.

Fig 12.3: Claimant count Wales February 2007 to April 2014



Source: Statswales

Claimant counts have followed a similar path to quarterly ILO unemployment in Wales, rising sharply during 2008 and early 2009, tapering off toward the end of 2009, and then falling to pre-recession levels in late 2012. Claimant counts have continued to fall, with the most recent figures (April 2014) suggesting just over 260,000 were claiming unemployment-related benefits.

There is significant variation in claimant counts as a percentage of working age adults within the COASTAL region. The average yearly claimant count in all authorities rose between 2007 and 2011, but has fallen considerably since 2011. Table 12.1 gives the claimant count as a percentage of the overall working age populations in each authority and Wales as a whole. The COASTAL region saw overall claimant counts drop to below pre-recession levels.

Between 2007 and 2014 there was an overall 14.9% reduction in the number of people claiming benefits as a percentage of the working age population. There was significant variation within the COASTAL region, Ceredigion, for example, saw a 25.9% reduction in the numbers of people claiming employment related benefits.

Table 12.1 Claimant count as a % of working age population

	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	% Change
Ceredigion	10.7	10.2	10.8	10.6	10.1	10.1	9.3	8.5	-25.9
Pembrokeshire	13.1	12.2	14.0	13.7	13.5	13.6	12.7	11.9	-10.1
Carmarthenshire	16.0	15.1	16.3	16.2	15.4	15.2	14	13.2	-21.2
Swansea	15.6	14.9	16.4	16.2	15.4	15.4	14.5	13.8	-13.0
NPT	20.3	19.3	21.2	20.6	20.1	19.7	18.4	17.5	-16.0
Bridgend	16.9	16.2	18.7	18.0	17.2	17.6	16.4	15.4	-9.7
COASTAL Region	18.0	17.1	18.9	18.6	17.8	17.8	16.6	15.6	-14.9
Wales	15.2	14.5	16.1	16.0	15.3	15.4	14.4	13.5	-12.6

Source: Statswales

12.3 Health and the recession

Higher unemployment levels during recessions have a clear impact on a range of social and economic outcomes (e.g. higher crime rates and lower levels of demand within affected areas and worsening public finances through lower tax receipts and higher benefit payments), but there are also major impacts on the people who lose their jobs. In particular, there is considerable evidence to suggest that unemployment causes **higher levels of depression** and **poorer health outcomes**⁷⁰ (see Drinkwater et al 2007). Following the onset of the recession, across Europe the gap in unemployment between individuals with and without mental health problems significantly widened (odds ratio: 1.12, 95% confidence interval: 1.03, 1.34).⁷¹ Research suggests that the economic hardship many experienced during the recession may intensify mental health issues, especially for males and individuals with low levels of education.

In a comprehensive review of literature and evidence of the impact of recessions on health, Elliot et al. (2011) found *“the general picture appears to be that the strongest negative effect is on mental health (including the risk of suicide), with evidence of impact on some physical health problems.”*⁷² It is also recognised that there is an element of dual causation in that as well as unemployment being a threat to health, ill health is also a threat to employment. However the evidence does also suggest some health improvements during recessions, including fewer road traffic accidents and some improvements to health behaviours; alcohol consumption, smoking, physical activity and diet (largely due to cost factors).

The report suggested that: *“There is a need for flexible active labour market programmes that support people entering, re-entering or staying in satisfactory employment in parallel to maintaining and generating good health.”*

⁷⁰http://www.wiserd.ac.uk/wp-content/uploads/2011/04/WISERD_PBS_002.pdf

⁷¹<http://www.plosone.org/article/fetchObject.action?uri=info%3Adoi%2F10.1371%2Fjournal.pone.0069792&representation=PDF>

⁷²<http://www.cardiff.ac.uk/socsi/research/publications/workingpapers/paper-134.html>

The key target groups for COASTAL are people with mental or physical health issues and so any suggestion of a change in the nature and scope of these groups is an important contextual influence.

12.4 Conclusion

Unemployment rates, as defined by the ILO, have dropped below pre-recession levels. Correspondingly, there have been significant reductions in the numbers of people claiming benefits. The figures also suggest that people are not necessarily moving from unemployment and into employment, this may be explained by a number of factors. It may be due in part to the ageing of the population. As people move into retirement they are no longer classified as looking for employment, but reduce the overall population of working age adults. The discrepancy in figures may also be due to the way in which they are calculated. ILO unemployment statistics do not account for individuals that are long-term unemployed and have stopped looking for employment. If this assumption holds, it suggests that there have been increases in the numbers of people furthest away from the labour market and no longer eligible for or claiming benefits.

Wales is however beginning to emerge from a recession that had a significant impact on individuals, families and communities across the COASTAL region. Unemployment has remained lower than expected given the severity of the recession (Drinkwater et al 2011). This suggests that there has been some relative success in cushioning the impact of the recession in terms of unemployment. The impact of unemployment on other indicators such as health and well-being, however, remain to be seen.

13 Conclusions and recommendations

This final chapter of the report draws together the findings of the evaluation and makes a number of recommendations that we suggest should be considered if and when future projects are being developed.

13.1 The benefit to participants

The primary benefit of COASTAL apparent to the participants interviewed for this evaluation was the ‘stability’ and ‘social skills’ it brings to their lives (Chapter 6). The confidence that participants develop as a result of their participation in the project was also a common theme within interviews. The themes that emerge can in fact be considered as having two separate yet overlapping dimensions; a primary dimension of social development and a secondary dimension of increasing employability as illustrated by the graphic to the right.



From the participants perspective, it is clear that both social and employment dimensions (or cogs as illustrated) are important in terms of their ‘progress’ and there is evidence of COASTAL participation leading to both those outcomes. The strong suggestion from the data is that employment related outcomes cannot exist without the necessary personal and social skills and abilities together with sufficient confidence in ones self. In other words, it would not be possible to achieve employment outcomes without also (and first) achieving social and personal development outcomes.

The importance of self-efficacy highlighted within responses to our survey of participants (Chapter 6) and within the literature review (Chapter 10) also suggests that future service development should seek to build on good practice across COASTAL provision in supporting and building participant’s confidence in their own abilities alongside actions to develop and enhance their skills and abilities.

Recommendation 1:

The emphasis on COASTAL providing a mix of support *based on the needs of the individual* and on overcoming their barriers to employment has been correct with the range and mix of support available being critical to its success. This approach should be maintained in the future as part of any future incarnation of the COASTAL project.

13.2 The type of participants engaged and the type of support provided

Broadly, the evaluation has concluded that the COASTAL model reflects and incorporates the latest thinking and research on supporting people into employment as discussed in Chapter 10. Either explicitly or implicitly, the project seeks to promote and develop protective factors that have been identified by research as important pre-requisites for successful transitions into employment.

With such a diverse client base, the challenge is ensuring that all clients receive systematic and coherent support that simultaneously builds the combination of factors, including self-efficacy and addressing health related barriers to employment. COASTAL allows for this by developing a plan for each individual participant which seeks to address the range of barriers and challenges that they face and then reviewing and updating that plan as the individual progresses.

The broad range of participants being supported has however been a challenge for the project. The emphasis was always on working with participants who were the furthest away from the labour market and on helping those participants to progress *towards* a situation where they are able to gain and hold employment. However, the changes to the target for moving participants *into* employment during the lifetime of the project (down from 32% of participants engaged to 10%) is an indication that the project's potential to achieve actual employment outcomes was accepted as being less than originally anticipated.

A number of factors have led to this change including the economic recession and the introduction of new support structures such as the DWP Work Programme (as discussed in Chapters 11 and 12). However, it would seem clear that COASTAL has been even more about moving participants *towards* employment rather than *into* employment than originally conceived.

The research with participants undertaken for this evaluation suggest that:

- Participants who reported no significant barrier to employment were the most likely to secure employment and those who reported drugs and alcohol dependency were the least; and
- There was a strong and significant relationship between participant's perceived distance from the labour market and employment outcomes - how participants perceive themselves (i.e. their self-confidence) can have a big bearing on outcomes.

In light of the above, there is a clear argument that, *if* the primary purpose of the project is to achieve employment outcomes, it should be focused on engaging with participants who do not have significant barriers to employment and do not perceive themselves not to be employable. This has not always been the case for COASTAL which, it could be argued actually taken the opposite approach in respects of much of its activity. This should not however necessarily be interpreted as a criticism of the project because that is what it was designed to do.

Analysis of the interviews with participants underlines the wide range of participants that COASTAL supported ranging from those who are relatively close to the labour market to those who need a considerable amount of support before they could be considered to be ready to enter employment or further learning. This was also reflected in the interviews with project managers, project staff and when analysing the performance of different elements of the project against the performance indicators.

There is a clear rationale for working with those furthest away from the labour market and supporting their progression towards a situation where they can enter the labour market in terms of reducing economic inactivity but also to reduce pressure on social services. We are therefore not arguing that those activities should be withdrawn. If the COASTAL project is replicated, the nature of the participants being supported should however be reflected in how the project is monitored and the performance indicators that are used.

Recommendation 2:

The potential for a monitoring process (including performance indicators) which splits the 'journey towards employment' into a number of stages should be considered as part of any future COASTAL type project. This could include performance indicators (output and results targets) associated with (a) participant *engagement*, (b) participants becoming *work ready*, and (c) participants moving *into employment*.

Recommendation 3:

If the focus of a future project is on achieving employment related outcomes (including further learning), consideration should be given to a more focused / targeted approach in terms of the type of participants that are engaged and service provided - i.e. a focus on participant with clear potential to achieve the desired outcomes within the lifetime of the project and on the right type of support (see below).

The flexibility within the project which allowed Local Authorities and other providers to deliver support in a way which best fits with the structures they had in place already was clearly critical in terms of creating a regional project; the Local Authorities would not have been able to join the project without that flexibility. However, it did lead to inconsistency in terms of how the project is delivered across the region as is apparent from the analysis of the project monitoring data (Chapter 4), cost benefit analysis (Chapter 5) and interviews with project managers (Chapter 6)

The obvious question is - does that matter? Most stakeholders argued that it should not, as long as the outcomes of the project are being achieved. We would generally support that view and favour an outcome driven approach. However, the inconsistencies in terms of delivery that such an approach generates need to be taken into account. In particular, there is a risk that such flexibility will allow the focus of the project to 'drift' in some areas (e.g. the focus on achieving employment outcomes becomes diluted) and it could be argued that the varying performance of different elements of the COASTAL project is evidence that this has occurred.

Recommendation 4:

Future regional projects should maintain the flexibility (outcome focus) that allows local authorities and other partners to deliver a service in a way which builds upon and adds value to existing services in their area. *However*, there must be a clear and consistent focus on achieving a common outcome (e.g. employment outcomes). Key elements of a project which are considered to be critical to its success (e.g. a central referral process / team) should also be consistent across a regional project. In other words, the flexibility should not be to the extent that there is no clear and consistent outcome or no consistency in terms of how a project is delivered across a region (see below).

In terms of specific activities, three strands of the COASTAL project stood out when stakeholders were asked to identify what they considered to be the 'core' elements of the project which should be maintained moving forward. They were:

- The individual led approach (rather than service led);
- Centralised referral process / teams
- 'Work projects' that provide a bridge between social services and employment

The final point is of particular interest. These projects were frequently referred to as examples of where COASTAL has been successful, both in terms of the benefit to the participant but also in terms of changing the emphasis of support and a greater focus on employment outcomes. A number of stakeholders described the 'massive leap' that participants needed to make to achieve the transition from 'supported' to employed and that this was a substantial barrier to achieving employment outcomes. The solution to this has been in a number of instances to set-up projects that fill that gap by setting up 'work projects'.

Because they were being set up as commercial (income generating) social enterprises they were also key parts of the exit strategy for COASTAL in a number of areas. Further, they offered the opportunity to create actual employment opportunities for participants who progress to becoming paid employees of the projects being set up (usually employed at the current time by the local authority but ultimately possibly employed by the social enterprises if and when it becomes self-sustaining). This is a key element of COASTAL which needs to be further developed.

Recommendation 5:

The 'work project' / 'social enterprise' model developed by COASTAL should be further explored and developed as part of any future programmes or projects. The potential to integrate creating and/or offering intermediary labour market opportunities alongside sheltered employment within any future incarnation of the COASTAL project should also be explored.

COASTAL was clearly an ambitious project in terms of the change in the way support is provided to the target group that it was seeking to promote and introduce. The 'lesson learnt' is that such a change can be a challenging and long-term process to introduce.

One of the challenges for COASTAL from the onset has been the need to change the emphasis within 'social services' towards moving participants towards an exit outcome and specifically towards and into employment. The findings of the evaluation are that substantial progress has been made in this respect although the process has been slow. In particular, it is clear that the rationale for the focus on employment related outcomes within COASTAL has not been well understood (or, if it has been understood, it has not been accepted) amongst some of those charged with delivering the project, especially those from a social service background and a history of working with those with significant issues to overcome.

There are two ways in which this could be addressed. Firstly, steps could be taken to communicate (on an ongoing basis) with the staff in question in order to explain the rationale for the changes being introduced. Secondly, the experience of COASTAL suggests that it can be necessary to 'push through' the changes being introduced. In other words, both the carrot and the stick are likely to be needed.

Recommendation 6:

Future projects of a similar nature to COASTAL should ensure that local authority level managers are senior enough (or have adequate support from more senior staff) to ensure that the services being introduced are fully integrated with existing support structures within the authority.

Recommendation 7:

Future projects should include ongoing provision communication and consultation with staff about the changes being introduced to the service being provided and why they are considered appropriate / what the changes are designed to achieve.

13.3 The regional approach

The regional approach used for COASTAL has both advantages and disadvantages, both of which need to be acknowledged and taken into account when considering utilising such an approach in the future.

The single / central 'management' structure in a regional model has perhaps the most obvious potential advantage. Key administrative functions are shared in a regional model, being undertaken by the Regional Team. Most notably, the audit process (and team) is centralised which should reduce costs and improve consistency of approach. The sheer scale and financial value (and therefore risk) of COASTAL has however led to a focus in the work of the Regional Team on ensuring the administrative process is robust, which it has been found to be as demonstrated by the clean bill of health given to the project by an audit in mid-2014. Inevitably however, this focus on audit and administration has an impact on delivery and the administrative burden was a constant criticism in the discussions with staff. It has also meant that the Regional Team has been able to commit limited resource to activities such as sharing of good practice, facilitating networking and providing what some described as an 'operational lead' that would have addressed some concerns about the different ways in which support was provided and performance against targets (as discussed further below).

Recommendation 8:

- (a) Future project should have a clear focus (balance) on providing operational leadership across the region alongside delivering of administrative and audit responsibilities.
- (b) The potential to create two regional teams (or regional roles which one partner leads on) as part of future regional projects should be considered; (i) administration & audit, and (ii) operational leadership and networking.

Recommendation 9:

It is recommended that consideration be given to limiting future 'regional' projects in SW Wales (or sub-dividing the project) to three local authority area groups – Ceredigion, Carmarthen and Pembrokeshire (West) and Bridgend, Neath Port Talbot and Swansea (East).

There has been substantial cooperation and sharing of knowledge and expertise at a senior management level. This has been especially beneficial in terms of developing and implementing a regional response to issues such as the introduction of the DWP Work Programme and the need to develop the action plan in response to WEFO concerns about the performance of the project in relation to the employment results. Stakeholders also highlighted being able to share risk amongst the partners specifically in terms of achieving project outputs and expenditure targets as an advantage of the regional approach; any under-performance in one part of the project could be mitigated by another. This risk is however still, to a large extent with the lead sponsor - in this case, the City and County of Swansea – who have the contract with WEFO to deliver the project and would be subject to any claw-back of funding. Whilst service level agreements will address this, it is still perceived as a substantial risk for any local authority taking on that role. This needs to be acknowledged as it could be a serious block on any future regional projects.

Recommendation 10:

The potential to allow groups of local authorities to share the role of ‘lead sponsor’ for high value regional projects in the future should be considered with a view to minimising the financial risk that is associated with the role.

It is clear that a wide range of knowledge, skills and experience have developed within the various teams delivering COASTAL over the project’s lifetime. It is questionable however whether the best possible use has been made of that knowledge, skills and experience *at a regional level*. Interviews with project managers identified a potential model in which members of staff (in particular project managers) from within a local authority could ‘take the lead’ for a particular element of the project or activity on a region wide basis based on the fact that they had particular expertise, knowledge and experience in relation to that matter. For example, a project manager from one local authority could be asked to take the lead on the development of ‘work projects’ across the region. This would allow a regional project to utilise the knowledge and skills that exist in one or a few local authority areas across the region without necessarily having to recruit that individual into a regional team on a full-time basis. It may also reduce the pressure on the Regional Team to lead on those aspects of the project.

Recommendation 11:

The potential to give project managers from local authorities or other delivery partners within a regional project ‘region wide’ responsibility for certain aspects of the project should be considered as part of any future incarnation of the COASTAL project.

13.4 Performance against key performance indicators

For a substantial proportion of its lifetime, the COASTAL project trailed behind the forecasts for its key performance indicators in terms of expenditure, outputs and results. The project did however latterly increase the rate at which results were being achieved to such an extent that it overachieved against both the number of participants engaged and the number of participants entering employment, albeit against the substantially revised targets for those indicators.

A number of factors need to be taken into account when considering the project’s performance in this respect, including:

- COASTAL was working with participants who need a significant amount of support over a significant period of time before achieving a positive result; and
- The context within which COASTAL has been delivered has been challenging due to the prevailing economic conditions and the complications created by the introduction of the DWP Work Programme and ongoing reforms to the Welfare System.

An increase in the rate at which results were being achieved was always forecast in light of the fact that the participants COASTAL was working with required a substantial amount of support before the desired results could be achieved. However, the plan introduced in 2013 as a result of concerns on the part of WEFO that the project was underperforming has almost certainly contributed to an increase in the rate at which results were being achieved. The introduction of the plan can therefore be considered a success. We would however argue that it was apparent for some time previously that there was a very strong possibility that the project would not achieve its targets. The plan to improve performance should, therefore, have been developed and put in place sooner than it was.

Recommendation 12:

There should be a clear emphasis on performance management / monitoring progress against the performance indicators (i.e. targets) as part of any management and administration of future versions of the COASTAL project, with a view to introducing actions to improve performance against those targets as soon as it becomes apparent that there is a risk that they may not be achieved.

It is apparent that the method used to set the targets for the project, which was largely based on extrapolating the achievements of a similar project in one local authority area across the region, was not robust enough. It is however important to acknowledge that setting targets during an application process can be challenging due to the fact that a number of issues may only become apparent during the detailed planning stage. Some flexibility during that phase is therefore important.

Recommendation 13:

A more robust approach should be used to set performance indicators / targets for any COASTAL type project developed in the future to ensure that they take into account the specific characteristics and circumstances in different parts of the region. There should also be some flexibility in the detailed planning stages of a project to adjust those targets (up and down) to the prevailing circumstances at that time.

13.5 Cost benefit analysis (CBA)

The CBA undertaken for this report (Chapter 5) found that, for every pound invested, the COASTAL project gave a positive return of £1.09. As discussed in the report, this analysis needs to be treated with some caution due to the limitations including a narrow and specific definition of what constitutes an outcome. However the analysis is still instructive and valuable.

On face value, at £1.09 overall, COASTAL slightly underperformed when compared to initiatives which have been subject to a CBA using a similar framework. These programmes however appear to have a significant focus on employment outcomes, even though they worked with a diverse range of populations. We should be wary, however, of drawing too much from this comparison. Although the models underpinning each CBA included a range of similar variables, including savings to the Exchequer, each analysis contains a unique set of limitations and biases that are impossible to determine without revisiting and reanalysing the original data.

Appendix 1: Recommendations made within the interim evaluation reports

Report 1: October 2010

Recommendation 1

Whilst acknowledging that, in delivery terms, COASTAL remains a relatively new project, we would recommend that the Regional Project Board consider the need to *formally* introduce changes to the COASTAL project to reflect the shift in economic conditions (i.e. the recession) since the project was conceived.

Further, targets should also be SMART.⁷³ Accordingly, as part of the same review we would recommend that the Regional Project Board review progress against targets and consider / discuss the potential need to either:

- a) Introduce strategies designed to ensure that project targets (i.e. contractual obligations) are achieved – specifically to target those who are closer to the employment market (i.e. have less issues to overcome) and therefore more likely to achieve the employment outcomes / targets set for the project; and / or
- b) Begin initial discussions with WEFO on the potential need to adjust targets to reflect current circumstances.

As part of the above, the Regional Management Team should meet with other projects in the region who are working with the same ‘client-group’ as COASTAL in order to build relationships, consider the role of COASTAL and any opportunities for cooperation.

Recommendation 2

Whilst recognising the fact that tackling economic inactivity and moving people into employment is the ultimate aim of COASTAL, the fact that the project supports the process of overcoming barriers to employment and the ‘well-being’ benefits that this can generate needs to be re-emphasised and promoted, especially amongst the staff of projects / services that will be referring participants to the project.

Recommendation 3

One of the strengths of the regional model being used to deliver COASTAL is the opportunity it provides for networking and a sharing of expertise amongst the partners involved. The Regional Project Board should consider opportunities to increase the level of cross-regional cooperation amongst staff at a delivery level. This should include options to engage colleagues from outside the COASTAL project itself.

⁷³ Specific, measurable, achievable, relevant (or realistic) and time-bound

Recommendation 4

Whilst recognising that a certain level of bureaucracy is inevitable with any ESF funded project, the potential to streamline the paperwork associated with COASTAL should be explored by, for example, establishing a delivery staff working group to consider the matter.

Recommendation 5

The ongoing discussions regarding the development of a 'sustainability strategy' for COASTAL should continue, however, the Regional Project Board must also maintain a focus on addressing issues relating to the delivery of the current COASTAL project. Any discussions should also take into account the findings of the ongoing evaluation with regard to the effectiveness of the approach being utilised by COASTAL.

Report 2 (October 2011)

Recommendation 1

It may be that COASTAL, as a collective or the individual delivery agents, need to extend and emphasise the role of employment liaison officers, responsible for identifying businesses willing to work with COASTAL participants. The role could be to work between the COASTAL teams and the local employers to negotiate employment places and employment experience. This dialogue may be increased initially through SETs (Specialist European Teams).

Recommendation 2

The correct balance between COASTAL as an employment project and COASTAL as a social care project needs to be agreed on between the partners as there are some significant differences in opinion and potentially a risk to funding.

Recommendation 3

The Work Star needs to be used more frequently, with a regular and repeated cycle of assessment taking place, and actions developed from this assessment. It is suggested that each participant undertakes an assessment every 120 days (four months) and that this data is analysed by Wavehill and then sent as an information package to all delivery agents. The data will aggregate the progression across all participants, and then for each of the ten COASTAL partners. This will then allow each COASTAL partner to compare their data to the whole of the COASTAL project.

Recommendation 4

Some 'mission drift' is noted amongst COASTAL stakeholders. This may be partly as employment outcomes are, so far, very few amongst the COASTAL projects. However, the WEFO / ESF contract is explicit in its requirement of a focus on employability and employment. It is also clear from participant interviews, and speaking to stakeholders, that some COASTAL participants are not ready for employment, and probably never will be. These participants require a social/day-care model, not an employability/employment model.

Recommendation 5

The partners may wish to visit social firms from within Wales, but also wider afield to examine how social care, employability and employment and social firms can work together to provide service models with employment outcomes. If the partners wish, Wavehill can suggest several options for a COASTAL delegate to visit.

Recommendation 6

The issue of inclusion equality was discussed in the 2010 report and still requires some attention. Why are males 2.7 times more likely to participate in COASTAL than females? The cause may be systemic, in that for some reason the COASTAL project is more likely to appeal to males than females, or it could be sociological, as parents and carers may feel that searching for employment is a more male activity than female and so less females are presented to COASTAL for inclusion. The COASTAL team should be aware that there is a gender based equalities impact assessment in place for the Convergence ESF area.

Report 4 (January 2013)⁷⁴**Recommendation 1**

Building on the outline plans already submitted to WEFO, a detailed action plan should be developed, designed to ensure that the target results are achieved. This should include a review of the participants being engaged and those already engaged with a view to prioritising actions designed to support them to achieve positive results.

Recommendation 2

Looking forward to the next programme period, the potential for a project or projects that are more targeted at specific stages in the 'journey to work' should be considered. As part of this review, specific targets should be set which are applicable to the stage on the journey to work that the projects in question are looking at.

⁷⁴ It should be noted that report 3 did not include any recommendations focusing on an analysis of the survey of project participants.

Recommendation 3

Programmes as broad as COASTAL in the future should consider the need to develop KPIs and monitoring tools that are bespoke to different stages on the 'journey to work.'

Recommendation 4

Opportunities to increase the levels of communication with project staff should be considered and in particular to engage them in any discussions about the future of the project / a follow-up project.

Recommendation 5

Opportunities to increase and build upon the structures that are already in place to encourage cross-regional cooperation amongst staff at a delivery level should be considered.

Recommendation 6

Building on the work that has already been undertaken to date and the recommendations above, COASTAL management should consider the potential to establish a working group that brings together staff from across the project to review the project administrative process and, if possible, identify areas where further improvements could be made without compromising the need to meet audit requirements as set out by WEFO.

Recommendation 7

COASTAL management should continue to take steps to ensure that soft outcomes (i.e. Work Star) data is collected from as many participants as possible and that the data can be fed into the evaluation process.

Appendix 2: Indicator definitions

	Indicator	Definition
Outputs	Participants	The number of individuals participating in an ESF-funded project. Participation should be linked to specific outcomes and require a meaningful level of engagement, for example a training course. This excludes individuals attending conferences or individuals who simply receive information
	Employers assisted or financially supported	The number of employers that receive assistance or financial support, through this programme Assistance: advice, guidance and information which can be delivered through the following media: face-to-face, telephone, web-based dialogue, conference, seminar, workshop, or networks (OffPAT, 2005, p.8). For example, provision of advice and guidance on managing health conditions for employers. This assistance includes the provision of training schemes Financial support: Receiving a grant or loan. For example, financial support for workforce development by employers. This support includes training schemes
Results	Employers adopting or improving equality and diversity strategies and monitoring systems	The number of employers adopting a strategy, which outlines the key priorities for action by the employer and their staff to promote equality and diversity and challenge discrimination (GLA, 2005), and monitoring progress against these priorities. The equality strategies and monitoring systems must have been adopted or improved as a result of Structural Fund assistance or financial support
	Participants gaining qualifications	The number of participants gaining full accredited qualifications as a result of the participation in an ESF-funded project. A qualification would be defined as being with the Credit and Qualification Framework for Wales (CQFW). There are three pillars of learning within the CQFW. Subject to criteria this could be:- <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Higher education qualification in Wales; • A regulated qualification within the National Qualification Framework - normally a general or academic qualification such as A-level or GSCE; • Vocational qualifications within the Qualifications and Credit Framework. These could include small qualifications such as an Award (1 – 12 credits, Certificate (13 -36 credits) and Diploma (37 plus credits) • Quality Assured Lifelong Learning which could include bespoke company training or other programmes which have been recognised within the CQFW. <p>WEFO may require projects to report against a particular qualification type, depending on the nature of project's activity</p>

	Indicator	Definition
Results	Participants entering employment	The number of participants entering employment as a result of participation in an ESF-funded project. Employment includes self-employment and can be full-time or part-time. However, employment must involve a minimum of 16 hours work a week and must be paid employment. Projects must only report against this indicator if the participant enters employment within six months of completing provision. This indicator only applies to those participants who were not in employment upon commencement of their participation in an ESF-funded project. Projects can report against this indicator if the participant enters further learning but also enters employment for at least 16 hours a week e.g. Modern Apprenticeships.
	Participants entering further learning	The number of participants entering further learning as a result of participation in an ESF-funded project. This result is only achieved after the participant leaves the project. If a participant enters further learning whilst still being supported this should be reported as a positive outcome (see "Participants gaining other positive outcomes", below). Further learning can include formal academic or vocational education and less formal skills development training (including soft outcomes). For example, a young person who is classed as NEET (16-18 year olds not in education, employment or training) enters vocational training after receiving intensive careers advice funded by the project; or, an individual moves into formal training following outreach work funded by the project. Projects must only report against this indicator if the participant enters further learning within six months of completing provision. A participant can move from statutory to further or further to higher education, and be counted as an outcome. They may move through all of these stages but it must only be reported as one outcome per participant. Where participants are, on enrolment, already in education, the project should only count those participants for which they can evidence no future intentions of entering further learning at project outset.
	Participants gaining other positive outcomes	The number of participants gaining intermediary outcomes as a result of participation in an ESF-funded project. Intermediary outcomes, which can be reported are, completing courses (where this does not contribute to the gaining qualifications outcome), entering voluntary work, entering further learning whilst still engaged with the project, gaining part qualifications or attending a job interview. These are viewed as part of the journey to achieving final outcomes, such as entering paid employment or gaining qualifications. Other positive outcomes, may in exceptional cases, be agreed with WEFO.

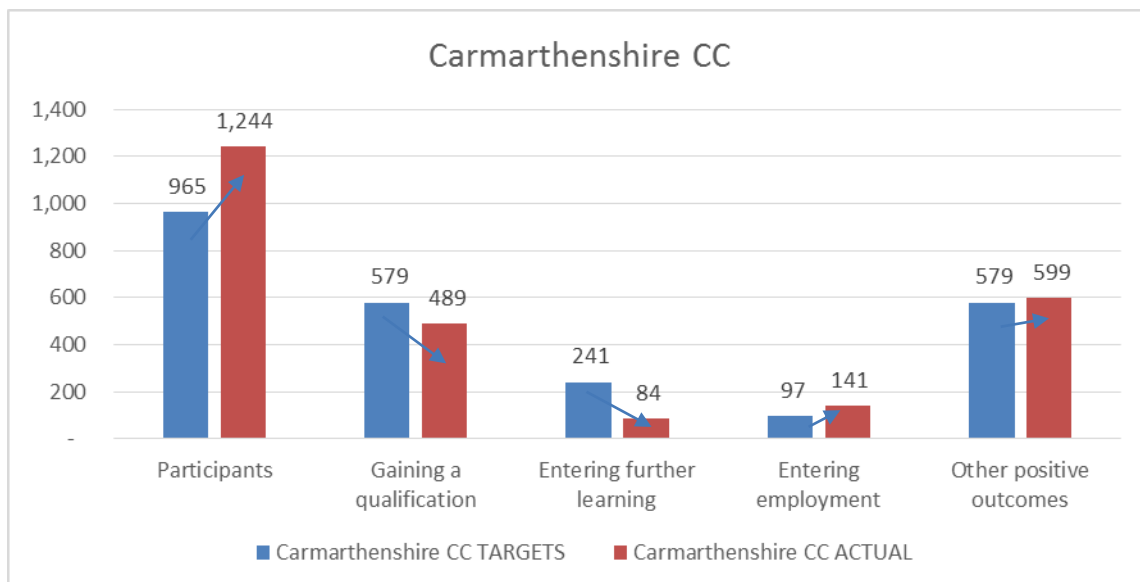
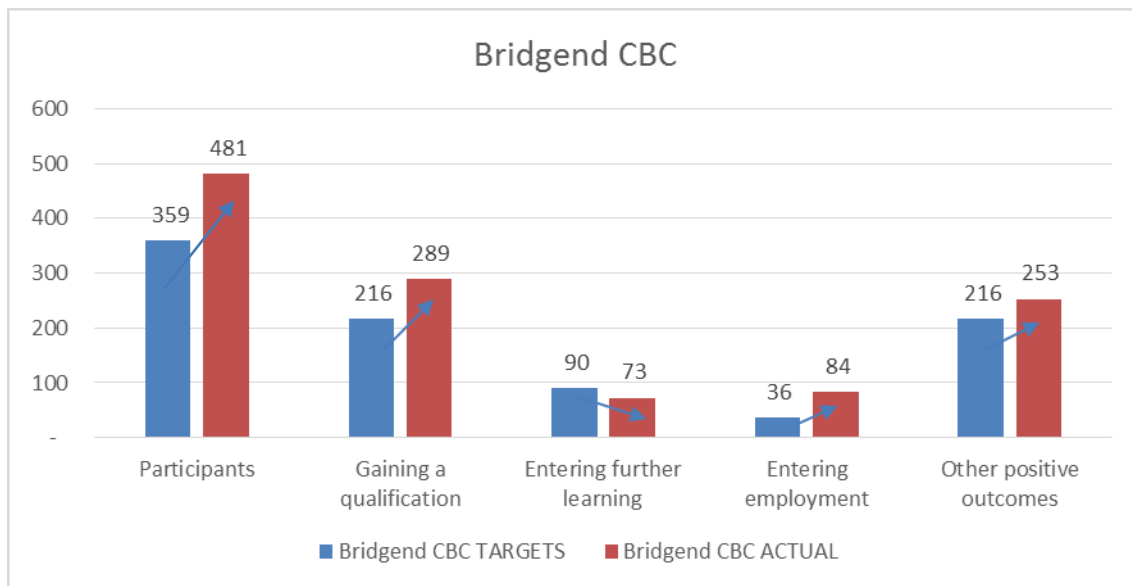
Source: WEFO Guidance on ESF Indicators Definitions (April 2012)

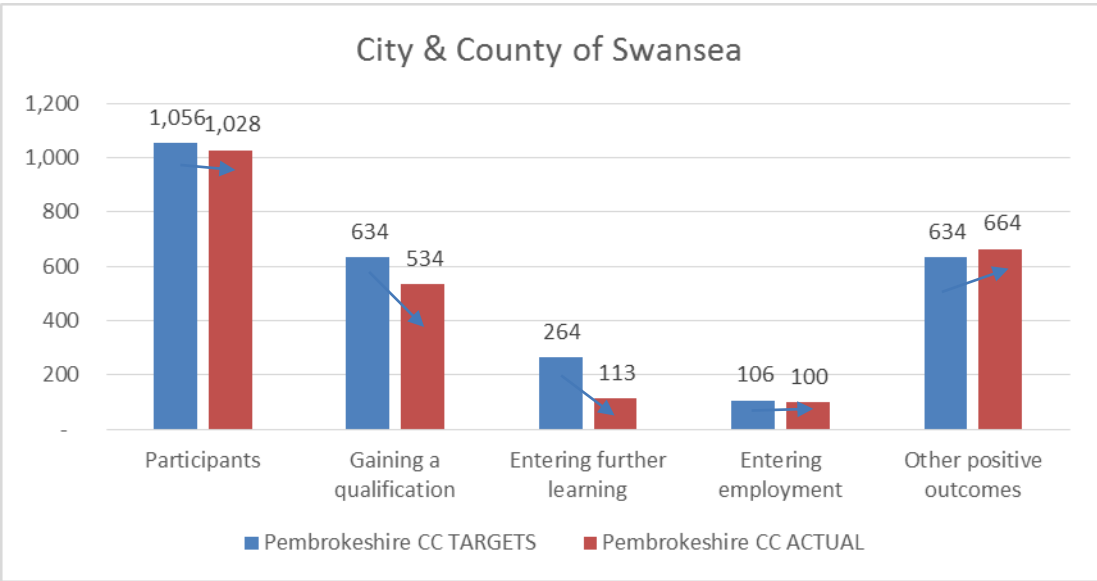
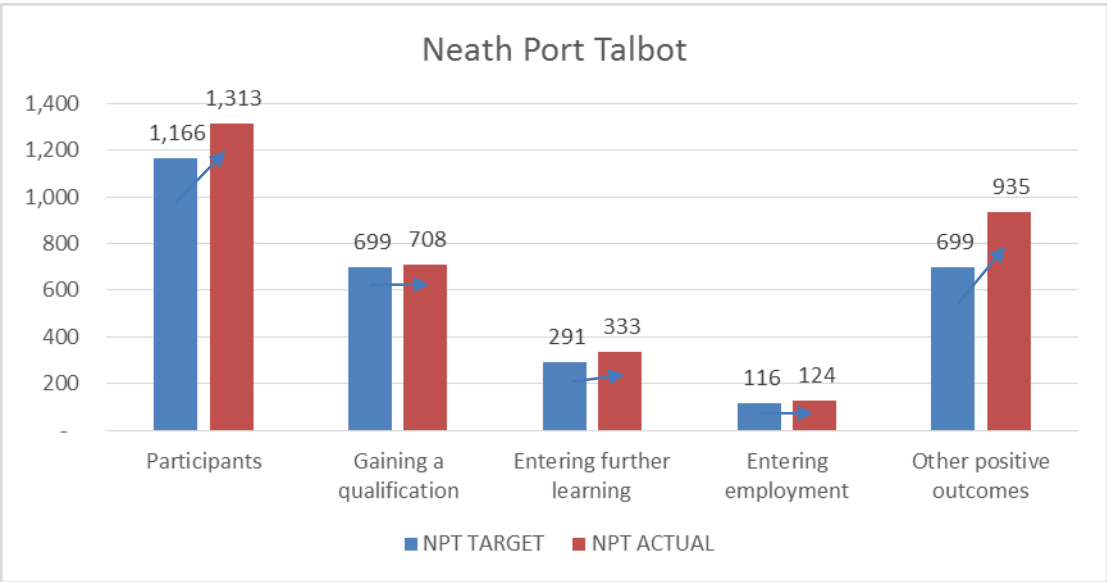
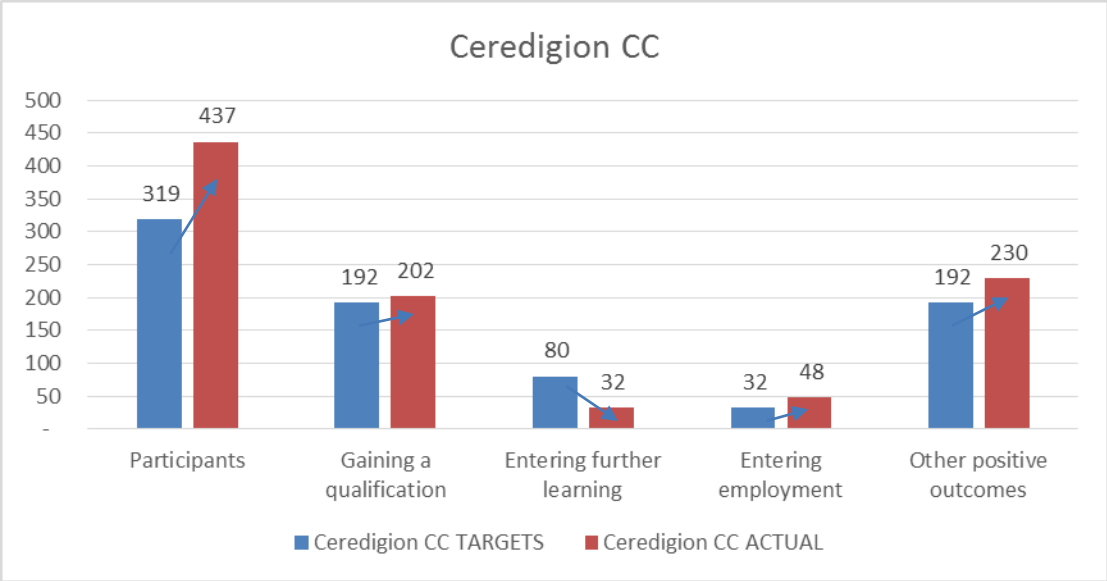
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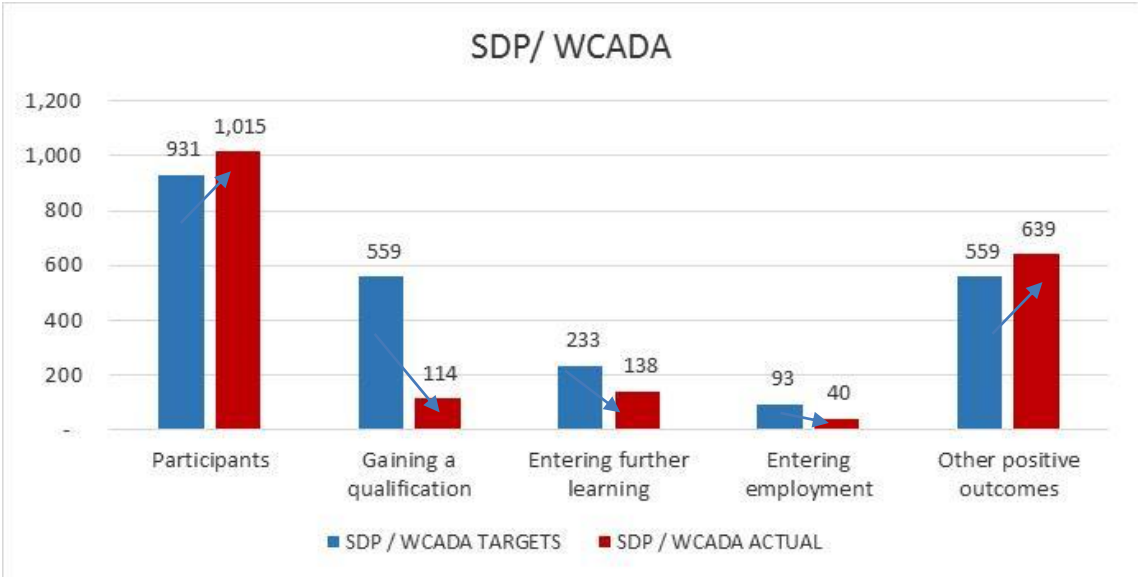
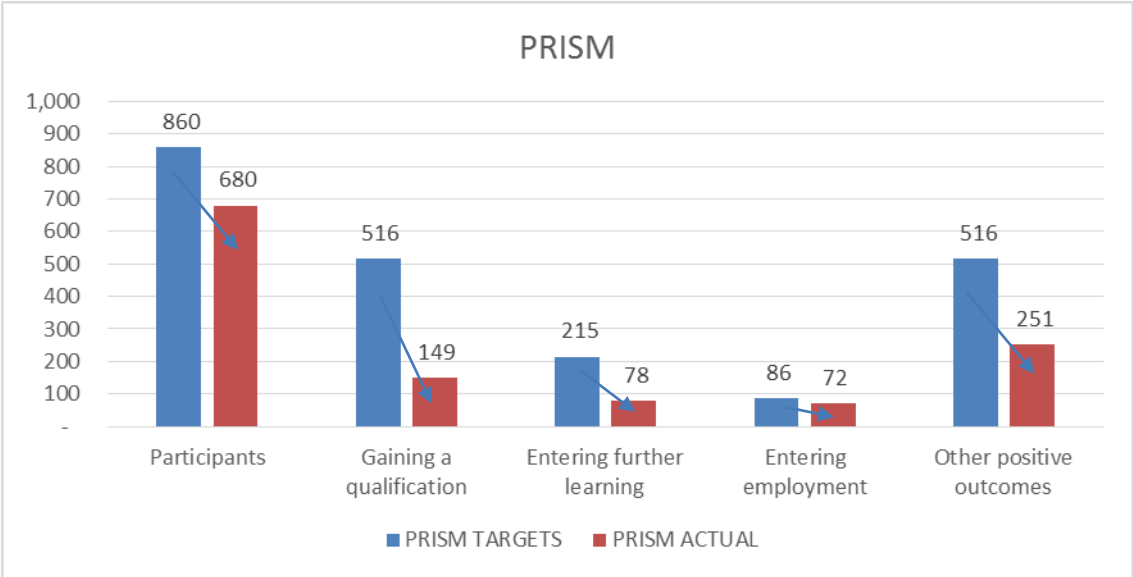
Appendix 3: Analysis of performance indicators per provider

Performance against targets

The graphs below show the achievements of each COASTAL provider against their (revised) targets.







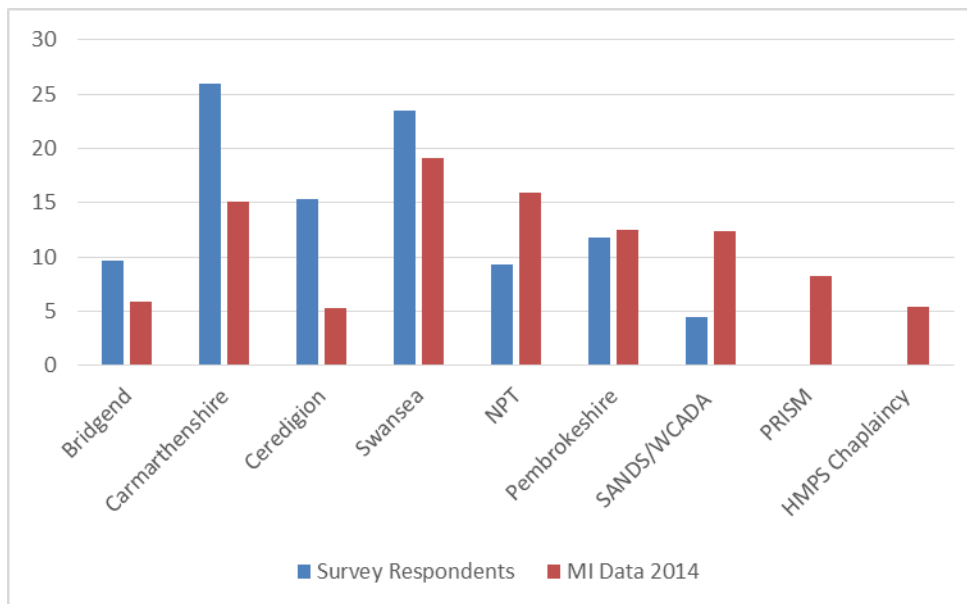
Appendix 4: Survey response notes

The sample

Participants were drawn at random from across the COASTAL region. The aim of randomisation was to capture a representative sample of individual participants accessing COASTAL services in terms of their characteristics, including the reasons for engaging with the programme, their levels of motivation, and the final outcomes that they were able to achieve.

In assessing the representative nature of the sample, we compared the overall numbers of participants in each project against those of the survey sample. It appears that Bridgend, Carmarthenshire, Ceredigion and Swansea are over-represented in the sample, whilst Neath Port Talbot, Pembrokeshire and SANDS/WCADA are under-represented. PRISM participants were recorded under an LA as opposed to uniquely attending the project. HMPS Chaplaincy are not represented in this sample as it was not possible for COASTAL to provide contacts to interview.

Figure A4.1: % of COASTAL participants interviewed by local authority area, compared to actuals presented in MI Data (August, 2014)



N = Survey Participants = 247, MI Data = 8223

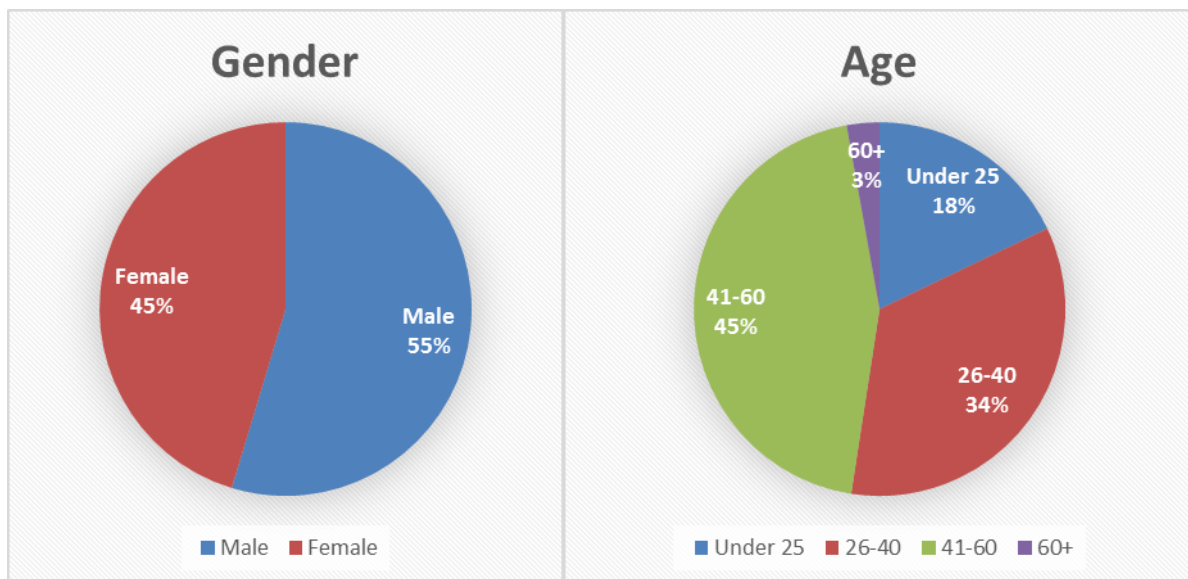
This analysis suggests that the sample differs slightly from the general population of COASTAL participants. Randomisation as a sampling technique is not guaranteed to provide a representative sample, and can reproduce systematic imbalances within the data that was used to draw participants. A relatively high proportion of the sample originate from two areas (Carmarthenshire and Swansea). This may be due in part to the high number of contacts those areas were able to provide when contacting participants.

In light of the above, the following analysis should be considered as indicative, rather than a definitive statement of the performance of COASTAL. The results of the analysis are not necessarily generalisable to all projects, especially to PRISM and HMPS Chaplaincy. The analysis does, however, provide extremely valuable insights that can help us isolate good practice and identify areas for improvement.

Baseline characteristics

Gender and age baseline data was also collected in order to understand the composition and characteristics of the sample. In terms of gender, 45% of the sample were female, and 55% male. 18% were under 25, with a large proportion of respondents, or 45%, aged between 41 and 60.

Figure A4.2: Proportion of COASTAL participants interviewed by age category and gender



N=247

Analysis of participant responses

The analysis of participant responses has been undertaken using a system called ‘open coding’ and ‘thematic analysis’, a method whereby the analyst reviews the text and then identifies ‘codes’ within the text. Those codes are then clustered into ‘themes.’ For example, the interview text may say: *“I like **the work experience**, I feel it gives me **confidence** and gives me **new skills**.”* The open codes are ‘like work experience’; ‘confidence’; ‘new skills.’

The thematic analysis then comes from these identified codes. Codes that mention work experience across several interviews may be:

- *“Like **work experience**”*
- *“**Work experience** helps me **understand about work**”*
- *“**Work experience** gives me **confidence to do things**”*
- *“**Work experience** worries me – I feel scared in case I do something wrong”*
- *“**Work experience** got me **a job!**”*

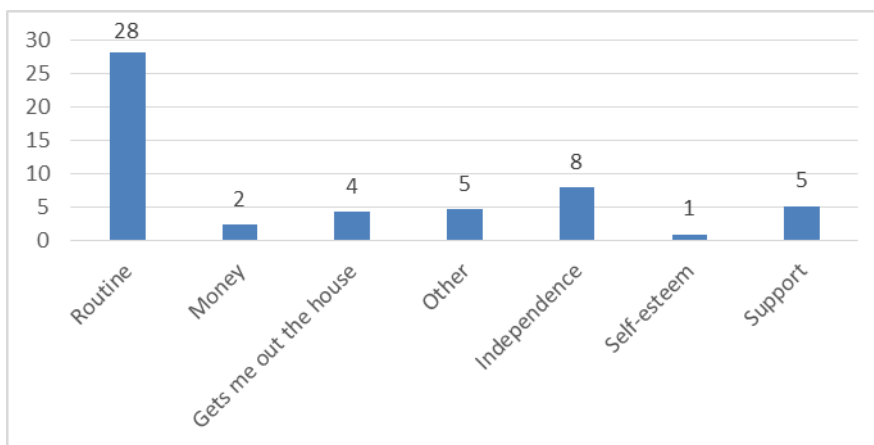
The thematic analysis may be that five participants noted that work experience was the main outcome from their participation in the project. However, the analysis would also identify that work experience can lead to employment and can build confidence although it can also be worrying for a participant.

Detailed analysis of the benefits of participation:

Stability and social skills

As shown in the graph below the ‘routine’ provided by or via COASTAL was the most common element or item identified by participants when discussing how COASTAL had benefited them in terms of improving their stability. Being ‘independent’ was also identified as an important factor within the ‘stability’ theme.

Figure A4.3: The factors identified by participants within the stability theme



Participants N = 98

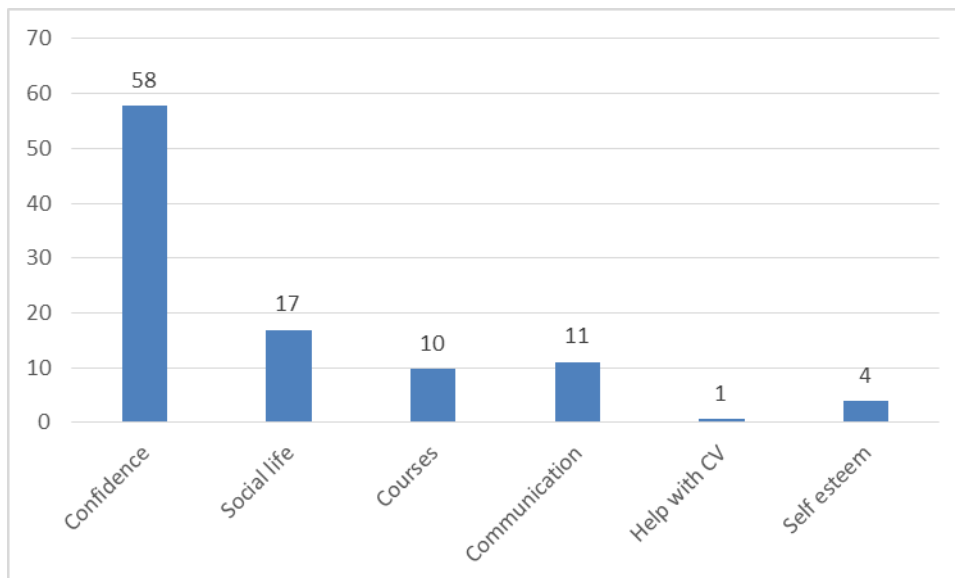
Note proportions add up to greater than 100% as interviewees can record multiple benefits.

The following are typical examples of the comments made by participants:

- *“It has helped my confidence, I'm more comfortable around other people now.”*
- *“It has increased his self-esteem and he feels more involved with the community now he's volunteering again.” (Interview undertaken with his key worker)*
- *“I've gained the confidence to try and mix with people and do something I enjoy doing like carrying on the floral art.”*
- *“I gained the confidence to get onto Remploy afterwards who are helping me find jobs.”*

As shown below, the factor that participants most often referred to when discussing social-skills benefits was, by far, a benefit to their confidence.

Figure A4.4: The factors identified by participants within the social skills category



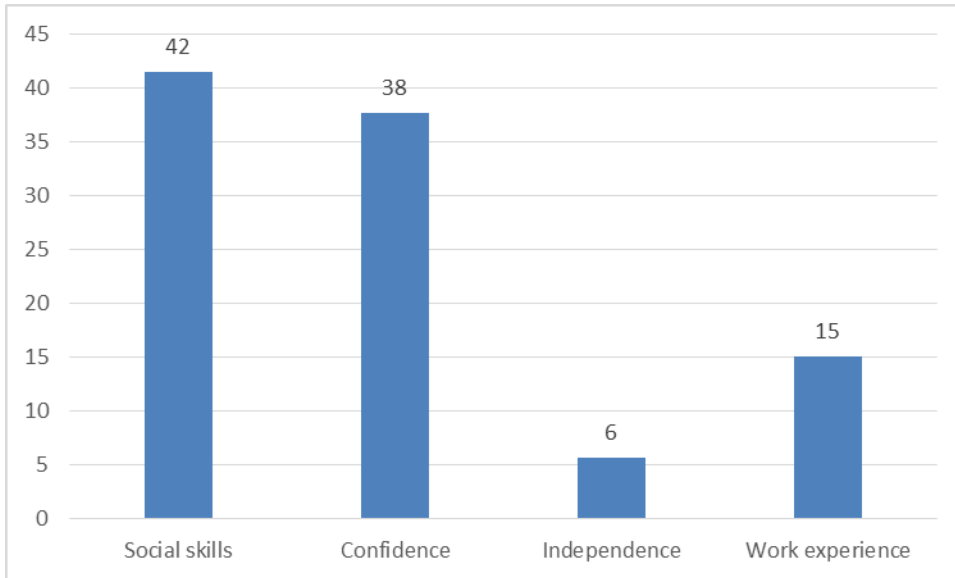
N = 154

The following provides an indication of the comments made by participants:

- *“They just helped me get out more, I'm a very lonely person, and I'd lost my partner.”*
- *“It's giving him self-worth and a springboard back into the world.” (interview with parent / guardian)*
- *“I'm now starting to mix with people who have no idea about my background but I feel I'm able to do that. The process we went through, I was a very arrogant person in the past, but I did have a wealth of business knowledge - I don't think I'm here for an easy ride. They are giving me a feeling of self-worth. I think COASTAL would have found me something somewhere else if there wasn't a job here. From this I hope to move on into the wide open world.”*

Social skills and confidence were also identified as being important during discussions about the other ‘soft outcomes’ of the support provided as illustrated by the graph below.

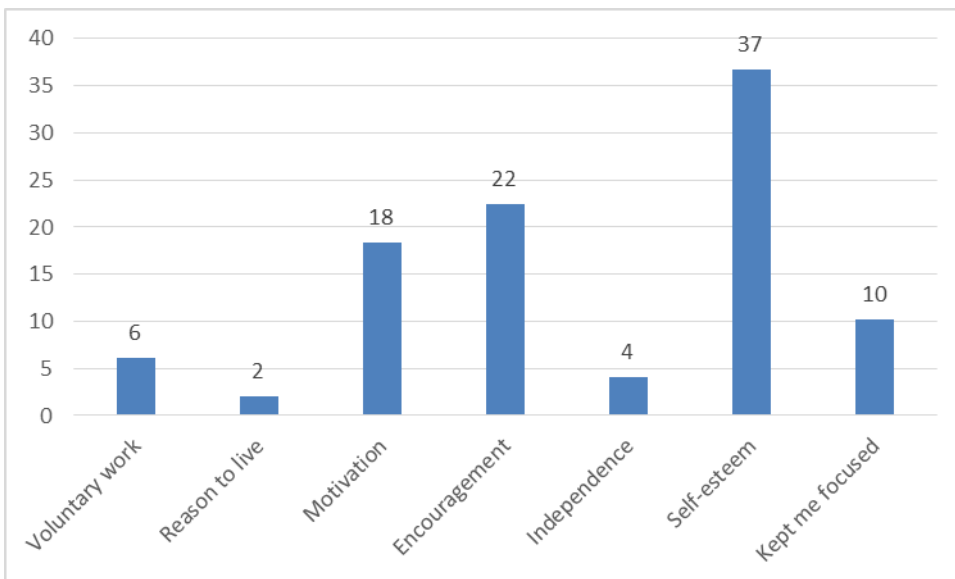
Figure A4.5: Other ‘soft’ skills gained by COASTAL participants



Aspiration and motivation

The factor most commonly identified within the aspiration and motivation theme was an improvement in participants’ self-esteem (37%) as illustrated by the graph below.

Figure A4.6: Benefits identified by participants within the aspiration and motivation category



N = 36 Note: proportions add up to greater than 100% as interviewees can record multiple benefits.

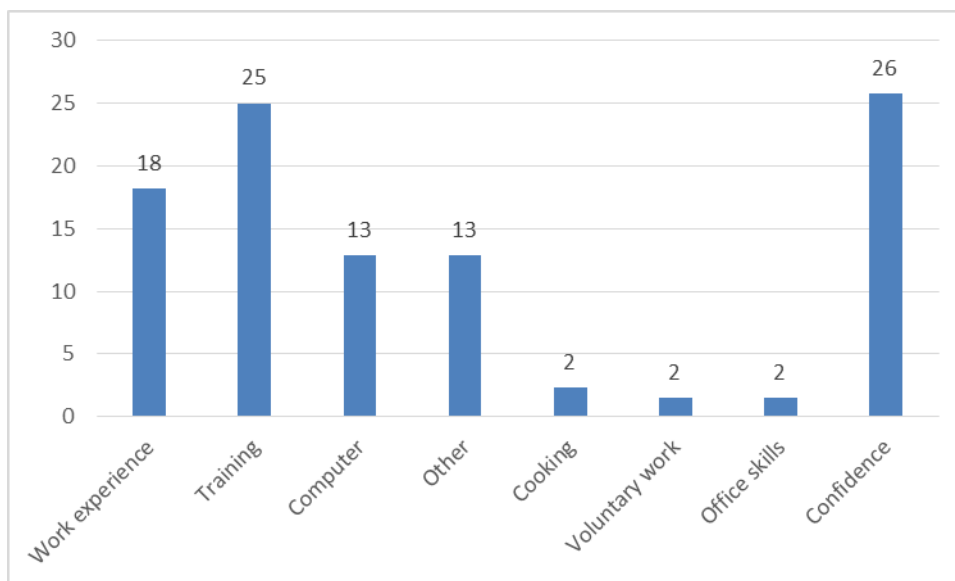
The following provides an indication of the comments made by participants:

- “[COASTAL has] given me the thought in my head that I was going to get work.”
- “I’ve had support to pursue what I wanted to do. It has given me more confidence to go out there and given me more of a bigger outlook and more of a reason to go out there and find myself a job or start a business.”
- “They (COASTAL) have listened to me; they’ve been able to filter through my crap and have found out what I can do and what I want to do.”

Job specific skills

A wide range of skills were identified by participants when discussing the job specific skills that they had developed as a result of participating in COASTAL. Confidence was held as an important outcome, closely followed by training. Work experience was the most common factor identified by participants within this theme illustrating the perceived value of that support.

Figure A4.7: Factors identified by participants within the job specific skills theme



The following are examples of comments made by participants:

- “COASTAL is helping me get back into the community, they do a lot of things there, I’m doing motor mechanics one day a week and anxiety management classes another day.”
- “The young lady from COASTAL comes to speak to me once a week at Cwmbwrla, I do a few hours gardening there every week, I have contact with a counsellor once a week too and I’m starting a part-time work placement as a caretaker today.”

- *“They were really helpful, they helped with my CV and got me in touch with the Dogs Trust to see if I could volunteer but they didn't get back to me then. They looked into all my career plans did research as to what I could do and what I was good at, they were really helpful. They put me on a dog grooming course and a maths course; they enrolled me on the courses as my confidence was so bad I couldn't do it.”*

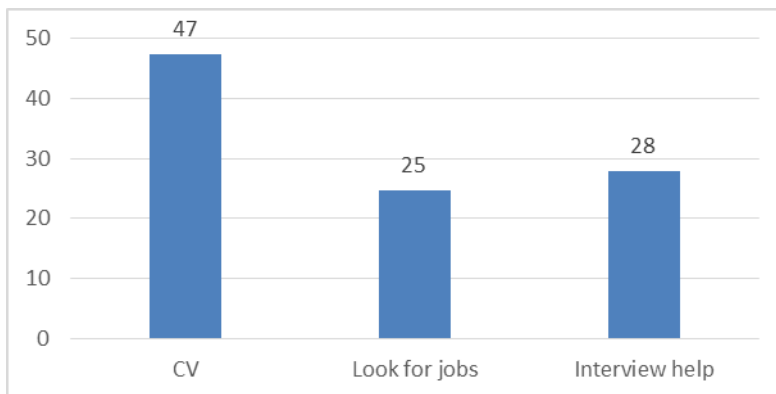
The comments above illustrate the relationship within COASTAL between developing and increasing an individual's self-esteem alongside employment related outcomes, a recurring theme in the analysis within this section of the report.

Job search skills

Job search skills are obviously important if long-term unemployed participants are to find employment. A CV is an important tool, but equally important is the knowledge of how to search for employment opportunities and how to approach an organisation to apply for employment and then how to undertake a successful interview.

The graph below shows, the development of a CV was the factor most commonly identified by those participants who acknowledged job search skills amongst the benefits of COASTAL support (75%). ‘Looking for jobs’ and ‘interview help’ were recorded but less frequently. This may suggest that there is an opportunity to increase the emphasis on those activities alongside CV development; employability can only turn into employment after a job opportunity has been identified and then won.

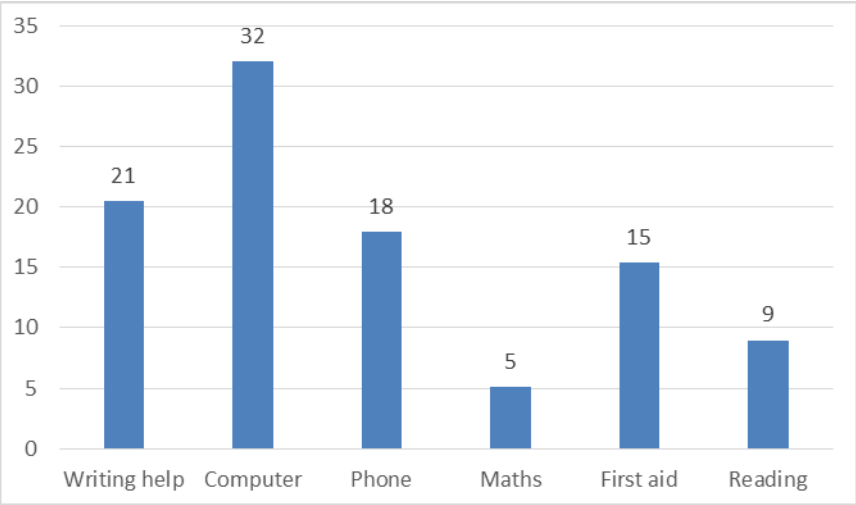
Figure A4.8: Job search skills



Basic skills

The theme of developing basic skills to enhance employability was recorded in 17/150 interviews. The main benefit, for 50% of the participants in question was basic computer skills development as illustrated overleaf. The fact that participants identified very basic skills such as reading and writing is however, another indication of the significant level of support that some COASTAL participants require before they can progress towards a position where they are employable.

Figure A4.9: Basic skills gained during COASTAL participation



Entering further learning

The number of participants interviewed identifying ‘entering further learning’ being gained as a benefit of COASTAL was relatively low at 1%.

Figure A4.10: Training routes / progression for COASTAL participants



Comments made included:

- *“They got me enrolled on training - dog grooming and maths.”*
- *“They're (COASTAL) helping me get on and achieve something with my life, they're helping me get funding to go on a course I want to do and they want me to go on a starting your own business course.”*
- *“They've sourced an advocacy course for me.”*
- *“I did a computer course and a cookery course.”*
- *“COASTAL enrolled me on a Welsh course too, to help me with my voluntary work as I identified I needed to learn Welsh and they put the wheels in motion for me to do it.”*
- *“They (COASTAL) got me enrolled on a computer aided design course.”*
- *“I'm doing Maths and English GCSE's so I'll have some qualifications.”*
- *“I've done first aid courses, different little courses - computers, health and safety and cookery.”*

Appendix 5: Cost benefit analysis notes

Where there was insufficient data to underpin the CBA, a number of assumptions were made. Each assumption carries the risk that the stated value is greater or lesser than the true benefit or cost of each transaction. In order to ensure robustness, assumptions were drawn from the best available data, or conservative benchmarks set out by the DWP.

Benefits:

1. Savings to the Exchequer for successful employment outcomes include JSA: £7,800, ESA: £8,500 and LP-IS: £6,380. Source: DWP
2. Prior to enrolment, 30% of participants claimed JSA, 65% ESA, and 5% LP-IS.
3. The probability of maintaining a job for more than 12 months: JSA: 55%, ESA 75% and LP-IS: 75%. Source: DWP
4. 40% of participants were claiming housing benefit prior to enrolment, and that they were claiming the national average. Source: DWP
5. 90% of participants were claiming council tax benefit prior to enrolment, and that they were claiming the national average. Source: DWP
6. Exchequer savings reduced by a Net Present Value of 3.5% for every additional year. Source: DWP
7. Additionally: 40% of outcomes were attributable to COASTAL, and did not displace other activity. This is a conservative estimation by the DWP.
8. Associated health care cost savings of positive outcomes: JSA and LP-IS £508, and ESA £1,016: Source, DWP
9. Total criminal justice savings for successful employment outcomes Males: 17-24 £5,170, 25+, £2,610 Females: 17-24 £1,250, 25+, £444: Source, DWP
10. Average earnings in Wales less tax and NI = £18,288: Source, ONS
11. GVA uplift arising from skills enhancement: £5,843 for NVQ 2+, and £2,922 for basic skills: Source DWP

Costs:

1. In work childcare costs for lone parents £723, couples £745: Source, DWP
2. Increased travel costs associated with employment of £420: Source, DWP

Appendix 6: Notes of workshops with participants at the project conferences

Focus group held at COASTAL Conference, 1st November 2010

The workshop was split into two groups, participants and staff. Participants were led by Louise Petrie and Karen Bourne and staff were led by Endaf Griffiths, all of Wavehill.

Participant feedback

There were eight participants present and two support workers in the group.

The topic of the workshop was “Are we getting it right?”

We started by asking participants what they thought was the best thing about COASTAL and what it had done for them and we got the following responses:

- “Earning a wage”
- “Developing my skills”
- “I have got a job in recycling”
- “It gets me out of the house”
- “Confidence”
- “Meeting new people”
- “Belief in yourself”
- “It (COASTAL) breaks down barriers”
- “Having support and being listened to”
- “Financial support”
- “Makes you feel good inside”
- “It creates opportunities”
- “I can meet lots of women”
- “The staff are human and they understand your feelings”
- “It is fun”
- “Make new friends”
- “The opportunity to do what I want to do; not what I’m told”
- “Having support/someone to listen”
- “Pregnancy support and associated benefits help”
- “Confidence in placement”

“COASTAL is breaking down the barriers.”

Many told by schools/Job Centres - “you will never work”. The participants said “Job Centre made it harder.”

- “Staff on the Project are human/fun/friendly - opposite of Job Centre”
- “They listen to you/take time”
- “COASTAL is a good name”
- “Made lots of friends”
- “The work I’ve done is being used - previous projects/work placements have thrown my work away once complete”
- “Creating opportunities”
- “Help achieve personal goals”

The second stage of the workshop was asking participants to imagine that all COASTAL staff had been sacked and that they were now in charge of how COASTAL moved forward. With this in mind we asked them what changes they would like to make and the direction they hoped COASTAL would go in.

Their responses are as follows:

- Awards for participants and staff on what has been achieved over the year.
They would like to nominate a member of staff annually that they feel has gone above and beyond their job role to receive a recognition award. Likewise they all feel that participants should be nominated by staff if they have excelled in a year to receive some kind of recognition award, they also mentioned that a cash prize would be welcome!
- Participant fun days
They would like a day where they can meet new people in the same position as themselves.
- Links for employers – information for employers so that they can get advice and support to employ people through COASTAL to encourage more employers to recruit more people with learning disabilities or disadvantaged people in general to break down barriers
- Quarterly service users focus groups
An opportunity to have their say and to put their opinions across and to discuss things as a group with support workers
- More group working
- More support with where you stand with your benefits
- Information and sign-posting services on how best to get into work
- More hands-on with the work force
- More in getting people to understand the participants position and disabilities etc
- Fight for more funding from WG
- Work with employment advisors in the Job Centres so that they can be more helpful
- Do training with major employers on how to work with people who are disadvantaged
- Campaign and spread the word on COASTAL – break down barriers
- Create more variety with what is available on work placements and training opportunities – have a wide choice of jobs
- Invite prospective employers to visit and see participants in the workplace so that they can see that we can actually work and work well – break down barriers
- Increased publicity - get Assembly Members on board to visit work projects
- A placement day for possible employees to show their skill level before interview
- Social services are mixed - One centre (FDC participant comment) is very good and supportive. Another centre (Pembrokeshire participant comment) didn't even know what a person centred review was!
- Educate people in general on disabilities
- Share what we have learnt with other local authorities
- Keep communication open all the time and share good practice with all
- 'Older' participants to feed experiences down to 'new' participants
- Support for recovery [drug and alcohol] - can't think about work until recovered

- Where is the cut off? Evaluation service to move people through from not working to working. One step at a time. Like medication from a doctor
- Continuity with appearance, e.g. polo shirt - split decision (some preferred the more casual approach as appear more approachable as not in uniform)
- Public bodies don't know what disabilities are. e.g. Police, etc.
- Staff trained to assess peoples levels more accurately - 'medically' trained. Personal assessment nothing to do with benefits
- Disability Employment Officers - not linked to COASTAL
- Legislation - forces employers to employ a certain percentage of people with disabilities
- Greater variety of options available/wider choices need to be available
- "Doctor put me on the sick" - work with GPs
- One central team for everything

Participant workshop at the 2011 COASTAL project conference

Session 1 – Question and Answer session with Darren Swift

Further opportunity for the participants to ask questions to Darren Swift⁷⁵, the keynote speaker at the conference.

After his speech, very few participants asked Darren any questions, however in the workshop nearly all of them had a question for him! The questions ranged from how do you overcome nerves to how does your wife feel about the things that you do? The group spoke a lot about how others in society talk to and about people with a disability and we discussed the need to be able to banter with each other without the worry of offending people, providing it was amongst friends and not done with malice.

Seeing someone like Darren who had overcome such adversity in his life was a real inspiration for participants to adopt a "can do anything" approach. This led to our second session where we asked participants to think about things that they really wanted to do, what they felt was stopping them and how they could overcome these barriers.

Session 2 - Locks and keys!

Brief: Think about something that you really would like to do; could be anything from doing more cooking to writing a novel! Whatever it is, write your "dream" in the cloud provided. Think about the biggest thing that stops you from achieving that dream, again it could be anything; money, mum won't let me, scared etc – write this fear in the "padlock" provided. Finally, think about ways of how you could overcome this obstacle i.e. speak to my mum, ask my support worker about cooking training courses, talk to someone about a job where I could earn some money etc. Discuss findings in each group.

⁷⁵ <http://www.starnow.co.uk/swiftie>

Feedback from session 2 – all 15 participants worked individually thinking about what they would like to achieve, what barriers prevent them from achieving this and how they could overcome these barriers: 11 of the 15 were happy to share their dreams whilst four wanted to keep them private.

Cloud = dream	Lock = barrier	Key = how to overcome barrier
To be a mechanic	Lack of basic English skills	Listen to people more and go on some courses
Work full-time in retail, learn to drive, learn to cook for myself, join a football team	Worried about my health to do any of these things	Talk to doctor to see if I am fit to drive, do more activities so I am fit to join football team, get work experience in shops so I can build to full-time work
To tell my story	Knowing where to start and the money to fund the process	Speak to my support worker for ideas
Work in a hospital as a health care professional	Lack of qualifications and transport issues	Talk to someone about qualifications I need and learn to drive
To be a mechanic	Worry about losing my benefits, basic skills – writing, training and health and safety	Get some basic skills training, find out about courses for mechanics, find out if I can get back on benefits if things did not work out for me
A place with 2 or 3 bedrooms where my children could come and stay with me	Money and stability	COASTAL – started work full-time last week!
Drive a steam train	Bad eyesight and medical conditions	Hoping my eyesight will improve and receiving help for medical condition
I want to do more things – cooking, bricklaying, going on holiday	Confidence	I want my friend to teach me to drive and do more stuff with my friend
To be able to pass my NVQ and City & Guilds	My learning difficulties	Having someone to help me with those difficulties (COASTAL support worker)
To work with kids in sport and make a difference to their lives	My reading and writing	Getting help with qualifications
Read and write more – being able to sort out my own bills and paperwork. More qualifications – gardening, painting and decorating. Learn to drive	Lack of confidence and epilepsy	Get help from my support worker

Session 3 – Design a poster advertising COASTAL

Brief: Imagine you are in charge of advertising the COASTAL project across Wales – come up with a poster to advertise what COASTAL does, who it helps, how it helps etc. Perhaps even come up with a slogan for COASTAL i.e. “Every little helps...” or “I’m loving it...”. Bear in mind that no-one will know anything about COASTAL at all so think about all the services it offers to you all.

Feedback from session 2 – The group of 15 participants were split into three teams. Each team had to design a poster and a slogan that they felt encapsulated COASTAL.

Contents of Poster 1:

- COASTAL is a project that gives training and advice
- Confidence building
- Opportunities for everyone
- Help with training, skills and learning
- Training in the workplace
- Activities
- Socialising with people
- Progressing
- Take the first step
- Job experience

Slogans: COASTAL is a shining light on your future
The higher the wave the better you achieve

Contents of Poster 2:

- Training Programmes
- First Aid
- Health and Safety
- Computer Skills
- Gardening Skills
- Basic Skills
- Cooking
- Woodwork, craft and design
- Learning about yourselves and others
- Help doing a CV
- Team building

Slogan: You only live once so live your life to the max!

Contents of Poster 3:

COASTAL – helps people of every age no matter what your disability.

- Confidence builder
- NVQ's
- Help and support in the community
- Computer courses
- Mentor training
- COASTAL has been my life line

Slogan: COASTAL will believe in you when no-one else will!

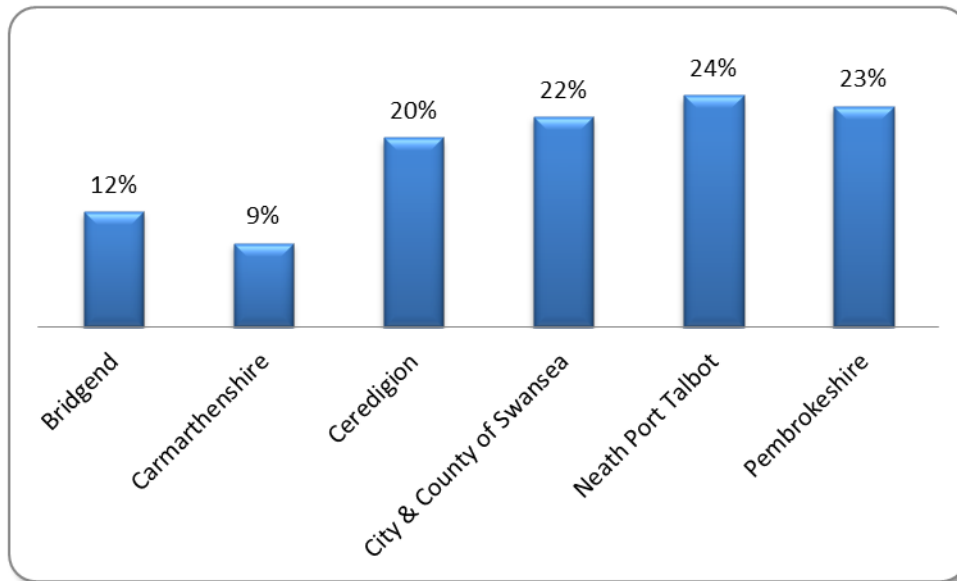


Appendix 7: Analysis of the 2013 online survey of COASTAL staff

N = total number of respondents to the survey

n = total number of responses to the question / total number of comments made

Submissions by local authority



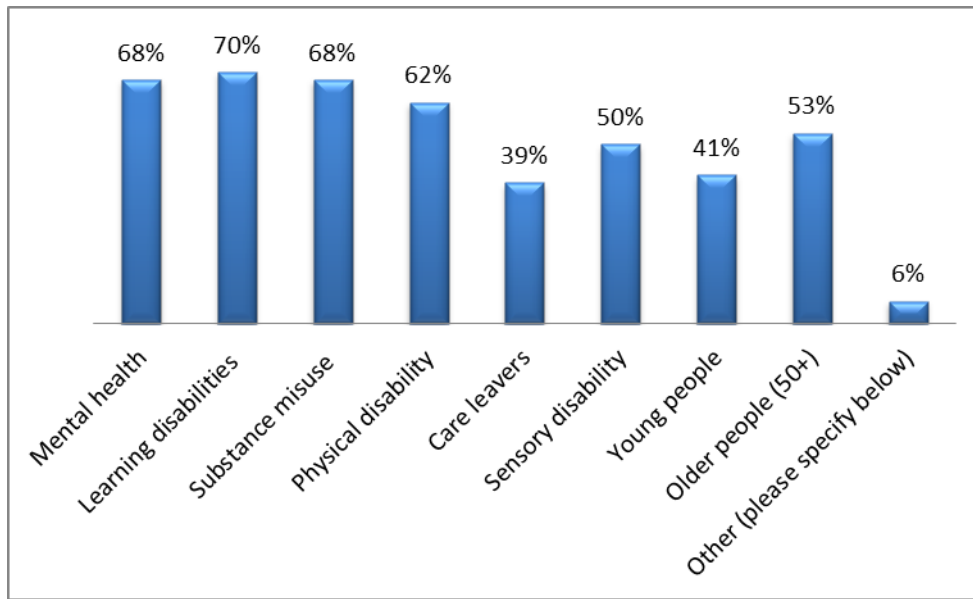
N=94; n=92

1. Please briefly tell us about your job

	N	%
Support participants	27	30%
Manager	18	20%
Administrator	10	11%
Assess participants	8	9%
Trainer	5	5%
Project manager	5	5%

N=94; n=90; responses over 5% shown.

2. Which group of participants do you work with? *Please tick all that apply*



N=94; n=94

Other:

Do not directly support participants
Do not work directly with participants, but work over all the disability areas as the Project Manager
manage contracts across all social care delivery
Participants with autistic tendencies and learning difficulties
People aged 16 + who may be having difficulty finding work or training due to illness or disability, mental health or substance misuse
The day service mainly supports service users who have been returned into the community mental health team. However we support individuals from the age of 17 upwards and those who have other care needs

3. How would you describe the support that is provided by COASTAL to somebody who has never heard of the project? Not just your job; the project as a whole.

	N	%
Providing support	39	49%
Supports those with additional needs	37	47%
Provides training	36	46%
Help move closer to labour market	21	27%
Provide volunteering and work placement opportunities	19	24%
Facilities skills learning	16	20%
Developing confidence	12	15%
Increase self-esteem	10	13%
Develop CV/job searching/applications	10	13%
Provide employment opportunities	10	13%
Advice and guidance on careers	7	9%
Referral service/signposting	6	8%
Financial support	4	5%

N= 94; n=83; responses over 5% shown.

4. How would you describe what COASTAL is trying to achieve to somebody who has never heard of the project? Again, not just your job, but the project as a whole.

	N	%
Employment success	28	33%
Lead participants towards employment	28	33%
Provide training opportunities	25	29%
Developing confidence	20	23%
Develop skills	18	21%
Education outcomes	17	20%
Support	15	17%
Breaks down barriers	13	15%
Empower individuals to achieve full potential	12	14%
Volunteer opportunities	12	14%
Work experience	12	14%
Promotes self-esteem	11	13%
Engaging those furthest from the labour market	6	7%
Signposting /referrals	5	6%
Opportunities	5	6%
Provide employment opportunities	5	6%

N= 94; n=83; responses over 5% shown.

5. What are the three **best** things about the COASTAL project and why are they the best things about the project?

	N	%
Seeing individuals progress/develop	27	29%
Training	23	24%
Tailored support	21	22%
Diverse range of people	21	22%
Funding	20	22%
Variety of activity offered	18	19%
Staff team	17	18%
Providing opportunities	15	16%
Getting people into work/learning	14	15%
Partnership working	9	10%
Building confidence	9	10%
Financial support	7	7%%
Flexibility	6	6%
Increasing confidence	6	6%
Work placements	5	5%
Work based schemes	5	5%

N= 94; n=253; responses over 5% shown.

6. What are the three **worst** things about the COASTAL project and why are they the worst things about the project?

	N	%
Paperwork/timesheets	39	43%
Rules and red tape	18	20%
Targets	18	20%
Project coming to an end	17	19%
Changes in terms/needs/aims of project	14	16%
Staff disagreements/issues	13	14%
Regional structure/partnership working	12	13%
Lack of facilities	12	13%
Communication problems	11	12%
Time consuming	10	11%
Management	9	10%
Clients when project finishes	7	8%
Not enough funding	5	6%

N= 94; n=242; responses over 5% shown.

7. Has COASTAL changed the way in which support is provided to participants in your area?

	N	%
Yes	53	65%
No	12	15%
More focused on hard outcomes	8	10%
Support not offered before/elsewhere	7	9%
Offer training/work placements	6	7%
Person centered approach	5	6%

N= 94; n=86; responses over 5% shown.

8. What do you think are the main barriers for COASTAL participants reaching employability and employment outcomes?

	N	%
Skills	20	23%
Benefit system	18	21%
Lack of work placements/jobs	14	16%
Confidence	14	16%
Economic climate	13	15%
Mental health issues	13	15%
Transport issues	12	14%
Discrimination	10	12%
Opportunities	10	12%
Experience	8	9%
Employers not wanting to take a risk	8	9%
Disability	7	8%
High level of support needed	6	7%
Alcohol/drug misuse	5	6%
Work ethic	5	6%

N= 94; n=86; responses over 5% shown.

9. How well does COASTAL identify participants who can work and help them find employment?

	N	%
Very well	28	33%
Well	14	17%
Initial meeting/enrolment process	12	15%
Link with other organisations e.g. JC+	9	11%
Referrals	7	9%
Monitoring and paperwork used efficiently	5	6%
Supports participants to work	4	5%
Identifies those who can work and provides opportunities to them	4	5%
Lack of jobs available hinders process	4	5%

N= 94; n=85; responses over 5% shown.

10. How well does COASTAL fit with other support services that are available via other sources in your area to the group of participants that you work with?

	N	%
Good relationships /communication with similar organisations	31	39%
Very well	19	24%
Well	17	23%
Struggle to work effectively with other organisations	11	15%
Okay	6	8%
Offers niche service	6	8%

N= 94; n=79; responses over 5% shown.

11. Thinking about the group of people that COASTAL is designed to support, is there unmet need in your area?

	N	%
When COASTAL goes it will be worse	20	36%
Gap in services for mental health (especially the under 25's)	6	11%
Too much emphasis on paid employment	4	7%
Not great support for people with autism	4	7%
Geographical variation	3	5%

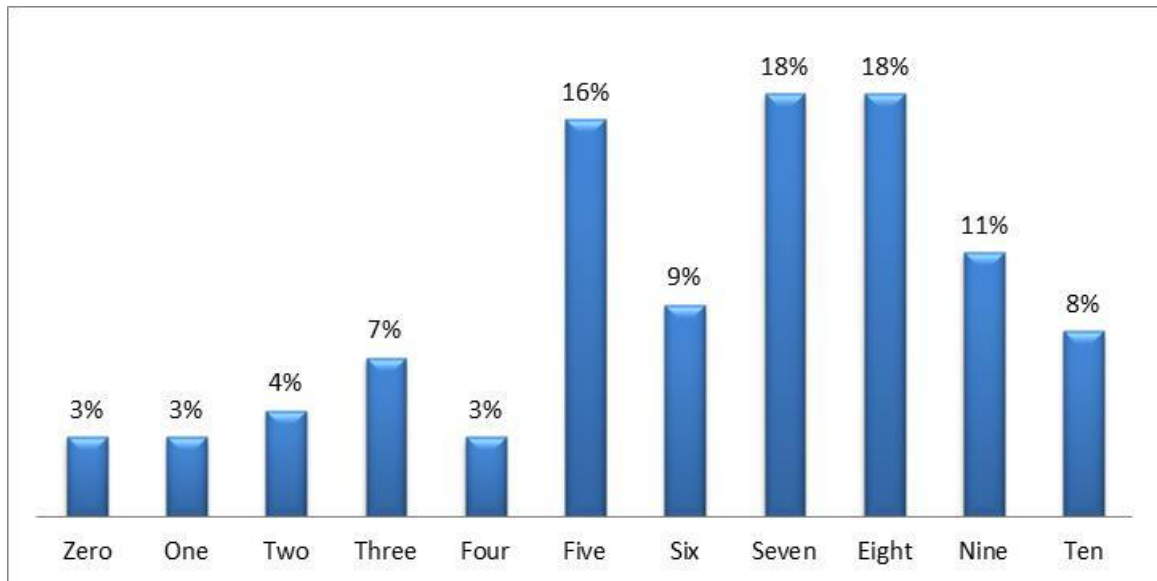
N= 94; n=59; responses over 5% shown.

12. If you were in charge of COASTAL, what changes would you make and why?

	N	%
Target appropriate groups	7	8%
Maintain project	6	7%
Re-profile staff	6	7%
Reduce admin time/procedures	5	6%
Increased communication	5	6%
More regional support	5	6%
More support workers	5	6%
Greater staff training	5	6%

N= 94; n=83; responses over 5% shown.

13. Taking all your previous comments into account, from your perspective, how well has the COASTAL project been **managed and delivered**? Please score on a scale of 10 (very well) to 0 (very poor)

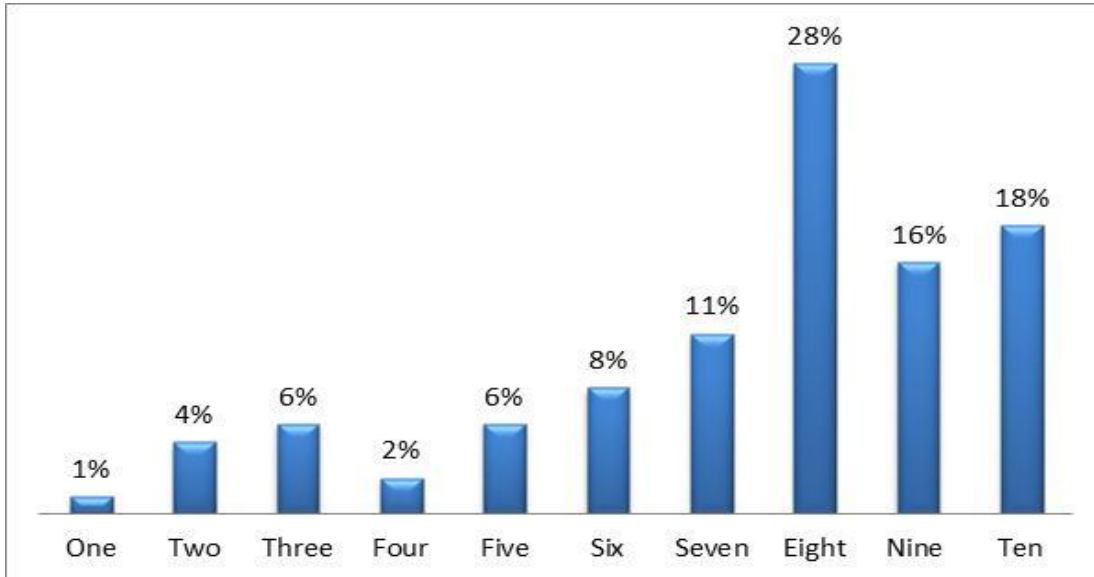


Mean: 6.2 (SD±2.6)

14. If you want to add any comments to explain your score (in addition to the comments you've already made) please note them here:

Score	Example Comments
0	<i>I understand things need to evolve but it feels like it's taken the whole project to get anything sorted and in this county we still don't have simple courses such as health and safety in the workplace put on regularly. More time was needed in the set-up of the project for the logistics to be sorted out rather than just feeling their way through for three years</i>
1	<i>Poor management, poor delivery, wrong staff in place</i>
2	<i>Poor planning in advance has led to the project continuously changing over time and the goal posts constantly being moved. This has led to confusion and annoyance from both project workers and participants</i>
2	<i>I feel a lot of the paperwork that is completed is purely for statistics</i>
10	<i>All staff are dedicated and work very well with participants</i>
10	<i>I think the COASTAL project is fantastic, from what I have seen nobody does what we do as well as we do. As the project comes to an end there is a real sense of fear, not just from staff because we're at risk of being unemployed but especially from the participants. You ask any participants we work with and you will understand how important the project and the support we offer to them is</i>
10	<i>This project has been a great success to participants and all workers. The closure of the project is one that should definitely not be happening and is upsetting to hear that some participants will be affected due to this. This project most certainly should be carried on for more lives to be changed in a positive way</i>
10	<i>I know how hard people have worked to make it a success</i>

15. Taking all your previous comments into account, from your perspective, how successful has the COASTAL project been in terms of **achieving a positive impact on the lives of the people supported**? Please score on a scale of 10 (very successful) to 0 (very unsuccessful)



Mean: 7.4 (SD±2.3)

16. If you want to add any comments to explain your score (in addition to the comments you've already made) please note them here:

Score	Example Comments
2	<i>Our customers who attend the day centre i feel haven't really felt any benefit from COASTAL</i>
3	<i>People were offered training and work experience, which increased their expectations of finding paid work, however this was not realistic or feasible</i>
10	<i>Although not all participants we supported achieved economic stability, I believe the help that was provided on the way to achieving this goal was fundamental in helping participants come closer to the job market and leading a more fulfilled life</i>
10	<i>I believe COASTAL participants benefited greatly in one way or another through the project</i>
10	<i>From the feedback I have received, the Project has had a lasting and profound effect on the lives of many participants</i>

17. SOAP BOX: Please use this space to add in any other comments you wish to make, remember this feedback is confidential so please feel free to leave comments.

Some typical quotes:

“A very unique and specialised service that is evidently needed and required in this borough has been stopped regardless of success or impact on society. The feedback from participants and other organisations is that there will be a large gap left behind in the community to which the Job Centre and similar operations will have to feel the brunt of such a lack of service.”

“COASTAL has developed greatly along its journey and as a development worker [I] feel that it has been met with overall positivity. Without it, the people we work with will not have the support and advice, not to mention funding required to enable them towards training and work. More importantly, COASTAL even though an employment outcome may not have been reached has undoubtedly helped people to believe in themselves whatever their abilities are and has helped towards eradicating the stigma and barriers that employers and participants face.”

“There appears to have been some lack of clarity of communication from regional team. This has caused some confusion in the delivery of the project. Changes in key staff have also had an impact and in my service area, internal changes have led to a lack of continuity.”

Appendix 8: Notes of the COASTAL staff workshops, 2014

Wavehill conducted a workshop which was held at the Richard Ley Development Centre on 19th February 2014. The workshop was split into a morning and afternoon session. The morning workshop hosted staff from the east of the region and the afternoon workshop for those from the west. The workshops were aimed specifically at operational staff only. In an effort to elicit a true 'grass-roots' opinion, project managers were not in attendance. Lead body emailed all project managers asking them to forward the names of the staff who would represent the team in their particular local authority area.

The sessions were attended as follows;

Morning session x 11 representatives

- Bridgend x 3 representatives
- Neath Port Talbot x 3 representatives
- City and County of Swansea x 2 representatives
- WCADA x 1 representative
- SANDS Cymru x 1 representative
- HMPS Chaplaincy x 1 representative

Afternoon session x 11 representatives

- Carmarthenshire x 3 representatives
- Pembrokeshire x 2 representatives
- Ceredigion x 3 representatives
- PRISM x 2 representatives
- 1 x other – representative of Carmarthenshire Day Centre

The aim of the workshop was to discuss the implementation of COASTAL from a staff perspective: What's worked? What could have been done better? As well as identifying and recording some of the lessons learnt. The workshop also discussed the findings of the recent online staff survey.

The following is a summary of the notes undertaken in both sessions.

Morning session

Question to group:

Is there a clear and consistent understanding of what the COASTAL project is seeking to achieve amongst those who are delivering the project?

- Changed recently towards employment
- Towards employment covers all activities
- Social Services → Employment Project
- Rise in target 'natural' – people developed / more services available as project has evolved / staff skills increased
- Lack of clarity from start ***including the*** name of the project 'COASTAL'
- Participants furthest removed from work → 'quick' wins?
- Positive outcomes – change in compliance
- Management issues – pressure to hit targets increased?
- Underestimated size of project and 'scope' of participants
- Focus /pressure of project changed
- Targets in place from the start – but staff/resource not in place?

Most of the group acknowledged the recent 'push' towards targets and felt that this had changed what COASTAL is trying to achieve i.e. moved from a Social Services project into an employment one. Whilst they recognised that being an ESF funded project it should always have been about employment outcomes they felt that the 'pressure' or 'focus' had increased in the last 9-12 months.

A number of the group talked about the 'change in culture' the COASTAL project has had since its inception; mixed responses considered it both being a very positive experience in some organisations to other organisations having 'struggles' with the project.

- Massive conflict
 - Social services / day service / struggle
 - COASTAL staff seen a 'threat'
 - Day services 'frustrated' - If saw steps towards employment would have helped (experienced good 'soft' skills)
- Some agencies see COASTAL as route to employment others see it as 'just another service'
- Original 'mission' unclear
 - Lack of communication
 - Not effective / what it would mean
 - No clarity to 'match funded staff'
 - Lack of support from LA/SS/centres
 - Delays in 'exit' strategy
- Very positive experience in some organisations

The group went on to discuss the perceived 'barriers' of implementing COASTAL in their local authority areas;

- Training – framework (massive barrier – due to time involved)
- Staff training eligible? Mixed understanding as to whether training is or isn't eligible
- Right people (staff) recruited?
- Training – each county procures – causes misunderstandings and time delays
- Training differently in every local authority area
- Poor working environment for staff in some LA's i.e. no work space, desks etc.

Question to group:

From a staff perspective, what have been the main lessons learnt during the delivery of COASTAL? What's worked? What could be improved? With hindsight, what would you change about the project?

- Improve communication from management to staff (this was not deemed necessary in the smaller organisations dealing with one type of client)
- More clarity needed at regional and management level
- Inconsistent approach in different LAs – no integrated approach
- Mission statement too broad? Yes
- Share success and communicate more amongst the different local authorities
- Projects and organisations take time to evolve
 - somainstream and keep skills must be sustainable (needed a clearer, tighter aim)
- Over ambitious within the timescales
- Have separate team for employment outcomes
- In some LAs – need money to develop training, centre etc. for clients other than LD
- Push at start of project to recruit participants – were the right ones recruited?
- Can't be everything to everyone
- More specific, more targeted programme needed
- Senior management clarity and communicate it
 - Staff, referral organisations etc.
- 'Menu' of activities that can/can't be done
- Not getting the right referrals (again, lack of understanding of the project)
- 'COASTAL' – last resort from some agencies?
- Services/staff posts (i.e. employment workers etc.) to accommodate targets to be in place from the start
- Need standardisation in programme
- Allow time to make contacts, set-up etc.
- Geographical issues – travel in some LAs very difficult
- Need risk checks for participants i.e. from referral i.e. JCP
 - Assessments, background info.

Generally the lessons learnt can be summed up as follows;

1. Lack of understanding of the project from the staff / organisations working in it caused issues from the beginning
2. Lack of consistent communication and clarity from management to staff
3. A more collaborative approach for future projects

Afternoon session**Question to group:**

Is there a clear and consistent understanding of what the COASTAL project is seeking to achieve amongst those who are delivering the project?

- Emphasis changed recently – employment push
- Broad appeal to all
- Contradiction i.e. severe illness not close to labour market
- Participants own interpretation of their illness i.e. depression (No occupation therapists to help diagnose)
- Traffic light system to refer participants – very effective in one LA
- Seen as ‘cash cow’ for training
- ‘Wrong focus’ – Start = Training push (right people?) Jobs!
- Work Star – one size fits all! Not appropriate for all / lack of training to use
- Unrealistic ‘follow dream job’ for participants at start - culture change
- Match funded COASTAL staff – lack of understanding / different approach
- Competition with other projects/organisations i.e. Workways
- Inconsistent relationships with Job Centre
- Working with ‘returning’ participants – lose income
- Wrong targets (too high etc.) at start
- Not one project i.e. different systems etc.

Very similar response to the morning session with most of the group acknowledging the recent ‘push’ towards employment targets and also the pros and cons of having such a diversified project. The staff went on to discuss some of the ideas they would like to see in any future programme;

- *Need the right staff (experience & skills)*
- *Each LA needs a senior/strong PM to make decisions / clear decisions*
- *Need an objective lead*
- *Need flexibility at senior level (listen to delivery staff)*
 - *But ESF and flexibility leads to inconsistency?*
 - *Achieve ‘overall’ outcomes using flexible strategic approach to achieve /balance*
- *Need clear lines of communication*
- *Should be more shared resource / joint working*
- *Need a better ‘buy-in’ from match funded services*
 - *Need ‘buy-in’ at highest level*
 - *Need to be line managed*
 - *Clear ‘goal’ plan communicated / clear direction*
 - *Implementation plans*
 - *Learn from experience.*

- Work projects / social enterprises should have been focus from the start – sustainable
- Employer focus i.e. match client to right job. Client and job ‘fully’ understood
- Unable to offer continued support once in employment – this does not aid sustainable employment
- WEFO should not be approving too many competing projects
- More ‘uniformed’ exit strategy needed from regional lead
- Staggered achievement of outcomes approach – not all left to end


Question to group:

From a staff perspective, what have been the main lessons learnt during the delivery of COASTAL? What’s worked? What could be improved? With hindsight, what would you change about the project?

- Needs uniformity across LAs to gain regional approach
 - Process
 - Plan work
 - Communication etc.
- Better partnership working – more integrated
- Clarity on outcomes needed (what is accredited / not accredited etc.)
 - Ability to ‘share outcomes’?
 - ‘Assisted’ outcomes
- Lead LA only had employment team in last six months – needed sooner
- Changing staff / no ‘uniformed staff training’
- Some LAs had structures to share practice and others didn’t – need consistent approach
- Wrong staff recruited – lack of skills and knowledge
- Need flexibility at a senior level – they need to listen to delivery staff
- Need flexibility with use of tools i.e. Work Star
- Processes etc. need to be in place from day one – wasted 18 months
- Decisions not made quick enough – too much ‘red tape’
- Project needs better management from people with better understanding of EU projects

If the project was to happen again the group would like;

- Exclude some participants (furthest away from job market?)
- Central referral team
- Empowered delivery staff
- Three-tier system (as per NPT)
- More intensive work at start to engage 'correct' participants
- More collaborative meetings for delivery staff – or blog so lessons can be shared
- More communication, empowerment and flexibility
- Smaller groups 6 x LAs is too big!
- Regional team to have clearer understanding of what happens on the ground
- More in-house training delivery
- Person centred approach (very important)



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